

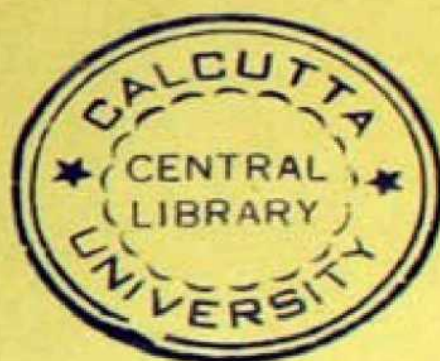


COLLECTED POEMS

MANMOHAN GHOSE

*Author of Love Songs and Elegies and
Songs of Love and Death*

VOLUME I



UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA
1970

Rs. 25.00

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EARLY POEMS AND LETTERS

EDITED BY

LOTIKA GHOSE, B.Litt. (Oxon.)

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR

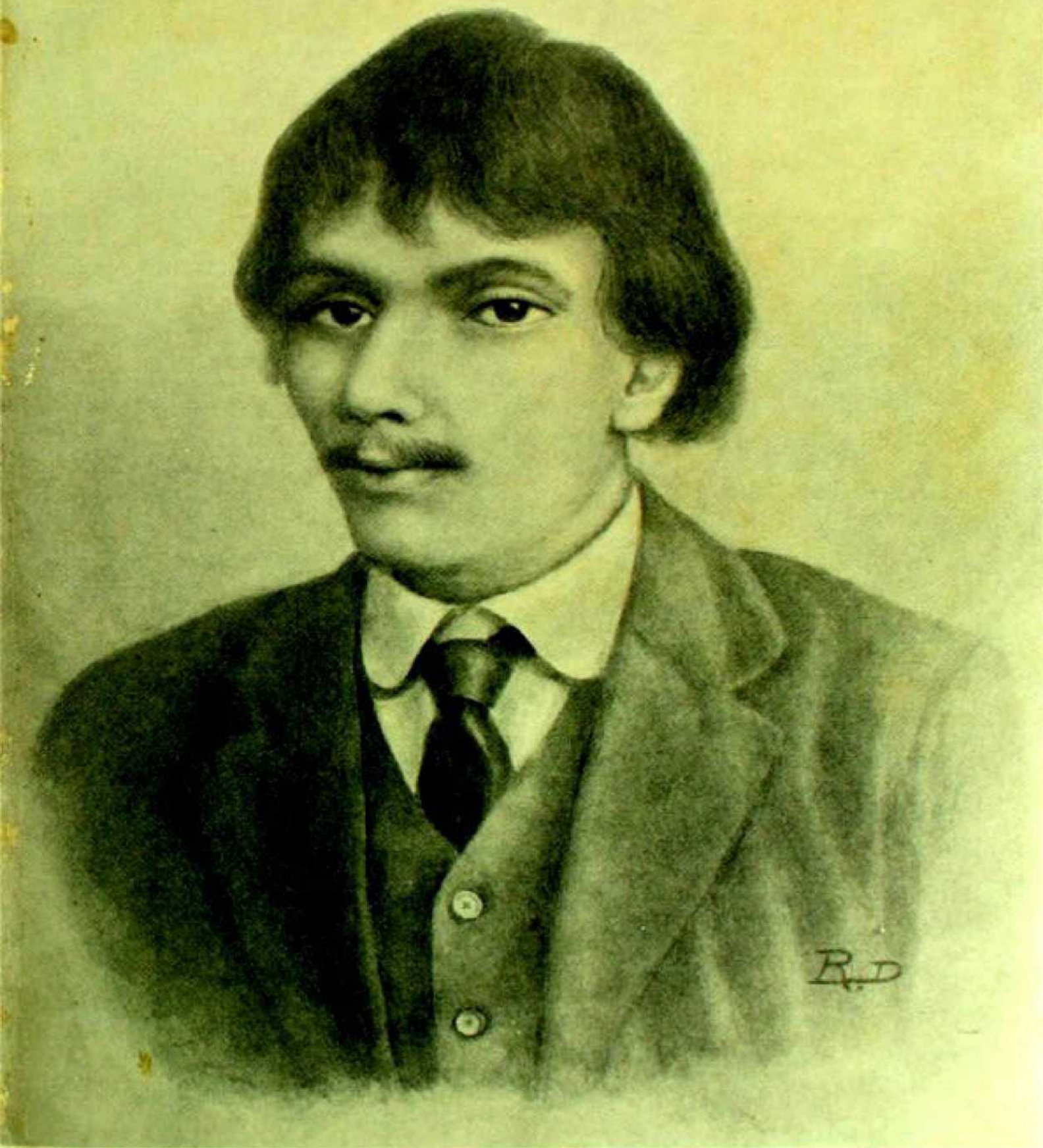
BY

LAURENCE BINYON



EARLY FORMS AND LETTERS

PRINTED IN INDIA
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY SIBENDRANATH KANJILAL,
SUPERINTENDENT, CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY PRESS,
48, HAZRA ROAD, BALLYGUNGE, CALCUTTA.



MANMOHAN GHOSE (1869-1924)
at the age of 23.
From a pencil sketch by Laurence Binyon.

PREFACE

All lovers of poetry will welcome the decision of the Calcutta University to publish the Complete Works of Manmohan Ghose on the occasion of his Centenary. The manuscripts of his poems as well as the copyright of his published and unpublished works were donated by us, his daughters to the University of Calcutta in 1938 with the hope that they would be ably edited and published. In 1945 the Calcutta University reprinted Manmohan Ghose's *Songs of Love and Death*, a posthumous publication edited by Laurence Binyon and it is now in the third edition. But by a tragic fate the vast amount of poetry written by my father has lain for years unedited and unpublished in the Calcutta University Library. Yet whenever I approached the University authorities about publishing my father's poems I found them sympathetic, but the hurdle of editing and finance were never crossed and there was none in the University to pursue the matter.

In 1959 when the attention of the late Dr. Nirmal Kumar Siddhanta, the then Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, was drawn to the fact that Manmohan Ghose's unpublished works were lying in the University Library he requested Miss A. G. Stock, the Head of the Department of English at the time, to edit the Collected Works of Manmohan Ghose but not much later Dr. Siddhanta died and Miss Stock having got the materials ready for Volume I of the Collected Works, before she could finalise it, retired from the University and later left the country.

In 1965 I drew the attention of the late Mr. Satish Chandra Ghose, the then Treasurer of the University and President of the Publication Committee, that since Miss Stock left, my father's works were not being edited by anyone. I also offered to edit Volume I of the Collected Works on the lines laid out by Miss Stock who had sent me the Contents of the proposed publication. He not only agreed but asked me to take up the editing of the other Volumes so that the Collected Works could be published by the University Press. Subsequently I was also requested by the Registrar Mr. Golapchandra Roychowdhury

to hand over the typescripts to the Superintendent of the University Press which I did in April, 1966.

The Collected Works of Manmohan Ghose are planned in five Volumes. The present Volume *Early Poems and Letters* along with the very touching Introductory Memoir of Laurence Binyon forms Volume I of the Collected Works and more or less covers the first stage of the Poet's life, 1869-1897. The dates of these early poems show that they were written between 1885 and 1899, i.e. from the Poet's sixteenth to thirtieth year. The letters cover a shorter period between 1886-1890 except for the last letter which was written in January, 1916.

In editing the present volume I strictly adhered to the arrangement of Poems which I found in the Contents sent to me by Miss Stock except that instead of publishing only a Selection of the Poet's letters to his friend Laurence Binyon I have included all the letters because they contain invaluable biographical material. I have also included an unfinished romance *Prince Pomegranate* which is often referred to in the Poet's letters to Binyon.

Miss Stock left no indication of how she would deal with the source material of each poem. It could have been done in various ways but for compactness I have only given the essential data. I have, in Appendix I, given the MSS volumes and published books in which each poem is found, the place and date of composition as well as the variant readings of each poem. In Appendix III have reconstructed the plot of *Prince Pomegranate* from notes of the poet adding his stray notings on the subject. Appendix III contains an interesting plan in which the poet classifies his early lyrics as he intended to publish them. Appendix IV which I have entitled *Musings* is a collection of stray thoughts jotted down by the poet, some of which can be traced as having been used in his poems. The Appendices are followed by an Index of the letters to Laurence Binyon. The letters have as far as possible been arranged datewise, but because of the incomplete nature of the dates given it is difficult to be quite sure that there is no mistake in the chronological sequence.

The second stage of the Poet's life from 1898 to 1918 may be said to begin with his marriage in 1898 to Malati Banerjee whose almost life-long illness cast such a tragic shadow on his life. In 1899 Manmohan Ghose started writing his blank-verse epic, *Perseus, the Gorgan Slayer*, which he intended to be his *magnum opus*. The poet worked at this epic, virtually without a day's break, from 1899-1916 as can be seen from the dates given on almost every page of the twenty-

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four manuscript volumes, most of which contain 300-400 pages. From notings in the MSS it is evident that the poet closely followed Homer, modelling his epic on the Iliad. The tragic cause of its abandonment in 1916 can only be surmised for he kept a strict silence on the subject.

Manmohan Ghose left the epic in a string of passages which have been written, re-written and added to in such a way that the passages are difficult to decipher and the utter negligence shown by the University in binding the volumes, so that pages of one volume have been bound in another, has caused general chaos. An examination of the volumes show, however, that the greater part of the adventures of Perseus in seeking and slaying Medusa have been covered. The intervening episodes giving the happenings at Seriphos during the absence of Perseus which the poet intended to interweave into the texture of the poem are not however all written. The sudden abandonment of the epic in 1916 left it incomplete.

In Volume II Part I of the Collected Works it is intended to include the first five books of Perseus. Books I-III and Book V were finalised by the poet himself. Book IV which fills up the gap in the story between Books III and V have been compiled by me from the variant passages which had not been finalised by the Poet. These five books form the introduction to the adventures of Perseus. The rest of the epic will be published in the other Parts of Volume II of the Collected Works when the complete poem is deciphered and properly edited.

Even from the five Books of Perseus which will be published in Volume II Part I it will be seen that a great epic which would be a rich addition to the epic literature in English lies on the point of destruction as the pages have become too brittle to be handled and the ink is fast fading.

Having given up further work on Perseus in 1916, Manmohan Ghose started a drama in verse which he entitled, *Nollo and Damayanti, an Indian Mystery Play*. Only five scenes of this drama have been written but they are expected to cover 200 to 250 pages printed in royal size. In its present form the drama is more suitable for reading than staging. The dramatic element lies in the psychological revelation of character rather than in narrative and incident. It abounds in rich poetry and is Shakespearean in dialogue. The poet worked at this drama from 1916-1918. *Nollo and Damayanti* will form the contents of Volume IV of the Collected Works.

With the death of his wife in 1918 the third and last stage of the Poet's life from November, 1918 to January, 1924, starts. *Nollo and*

Damayanti was abandoned as a great lyric upsurge gave expression to the Poet's love for his wife and sorrow at her death in two lyric series, *Orphic Mysteries*,—Songs of the pain, passion and mystery of Death and *Immortal Eve*—Songs of the triumph and mystery of Beauty. The first series consists of twenty-four poems of varying length which are published under the title *Portals of Vision* as well as five long Choric Odes dealing with the story of Orpheus entitled the *Awakening of Orpheus*, the *Grief of Orpheus*, the *Coming of Orpheus*, the *Hesitation of Orpheus* and *Journey Begun*. Though in the form of separate Odes through them the poet had intended to relate the whole episode of Orpheus after the death of Eurydice but while writing the Odes the poet fell ill and passed away.

The second series, *Immortal Eve* consists of three hundred lyrics, each lyric consisting of four four-lined stanzas. These lyrics though intensely personal soar beyond the personal to the typical and eternal as is suggested by the title. W. B. Yeats on reading a selection of these poems in *Songs of Love and Death* wrote to me, "When you sent me *Songs of Love and Death* you sent me one of the most lovely works in the world and even as I write my eyes are wet with tears through suddenly coming on the words

Your heart
Cradles august the pain
The ancient primal woe of man
And aches to mother Cain."

Before his death once more in 1920 the poet started an epic in short lyric stanzas entitled *Adam Alarmed in Paradise* which forms the contents of Volume V of the *Collected Works*.

The poem was started a little before the end of the first World War and expresses the poet's grief and shock at the devastation caused by the War. The poem is addressed to the Christian World and naturally the image and symbol used was one which was familiar to it. Adam is here the archetype of man and Christ the symbol of man's transformation and salvation. Christian Europe has throughout the ages denied Christ and rejected salvation through her bloody deeds. "How then shall salvation come to man?" This is Adam's question and in answer to his doubt Adam sees a vision of Christ re-arisen allaying the doubts of Thomas and prophesying the spread of his gospel. But still Adam cries out for the eternal salvation when gorgan evil will be slain and man transformed will be relieved of his burden of sin and anguish which like Atlas he bears on his shoulders. God

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then appears to Adam and asks him what sad fruit of knowledge has he eaten that he is too ashamed to meet his Maker face to face. Adam, bowed with shame and remorse, points to Nature, wrapped in primal innocence, and says that she can meet her Maker but how can Adam do so with the death-dealing engines still roaring round him and the spilt blood of his brother crying for vengeance.

He can hear millions of souls loosed from the body denouncing and accusing him. God then explains to Adam his slow purpose through history. The stars trace the development of man from the protoplasm and ape and describe the formation of Society. They tell him that man has left his childlike state of innocence to wrestle with evil so that he may grow strong in virtue. And still shall God's brooding love follow man till he flowers to perfection and as a promise, that the son of man will one day be truly the son of God, Christ had taken birth on earth. Evil is the instrument of God to hammer man to perfection. In this poem Science is accepted, Christianity is interpreted and God is shown as the motive force of both Nature and History. Yet a highly emotional vein runs throughout the poem and the lyric temper is maintained through a perfect orchestration of the varying moods and tempo. The four-lined stanzas in rhyming trochaic trimeter ensures terseness of expression as well as heightens emotional elevation. Like *Perseus* Manmohan Ghose left *Adam Alarmed in Paradise* in passages having finalised only the first eight Cantos of Book I. The poet being totally blind when he composed the greater part of the poem, which had to be dictated, repetitions and some blemishes in rhyming were bound to creep in. These would have been dealt with in revision but the poet could only revise the first eight Cantos of Book I before his death. Able editing can however deal with these defects.

Reviewing *Primavera*, the first anthology in which Manmohan Ghose's poems appeared while he was still a student at Oxford, Oscar Wilde prophesied that Manmohan Ghose would one day make a name in English literature. It is hoped that the publication of this first volume of the Collected Works of Manmohan Ghose will prelude the publication of the other volumes so that though a century after his birth English poetry will be richer by one more major singer, "who", according to Sturge Moore, "has such a wonderful sense of English words and rhythms, yet remains like a statue of Buddha as foreign as he is impressive by his profound sincerity and gentleness."

**PREFACE**

That Manmohan Ghose, Indian in temperament and Hellenic in spirit, truly forms a bridge between East and West is reflected in the words of John Freeman, who in reviewing Manmohan Ghose's *Songs of Love and Death* in the London Mercury of April, 1926, wrote, "Mr. Binyon thinks that no Indian reader would feel Manmohan Ghose a foreign poet, and I think no English reader would regard him as an Indian. He should be in our anthologies as an English poet."

In conclusion I express my deep gratitude to Mrs. Basil Gray, Laurence Binyon's daughter, for preserving Manmohan Ghose's letters to her father and permitting their publication.

10th, January, 1969

LOTIKA GHOSE



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INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR

Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadowed livery of the burnished sun!

These words, spoken as if from some spontaneous compulsion in a voice low and thrilled that itself seemed to glow, caused all the class of school-boys to turn their heads. At the back of the room, behind the rest, sat a young Indian with thick hair falling about his forehead, and dark lustrous eyes. It was he who had startled us with his impassioned tones. Where had he come from? How had he mysteriously joined us? Perhaps I deceive myself, but to my memory this was my first sight of Manmohan Ghose—an unaccountable apparition from an unknown hemisphere. The legendary East seemed suddenly to have projected a fragment of itself into our little world of everyday things and humdrum studies, disturbing it with colour, mystery, romance. No doubt I should not have been moved as I was had not the new-comer spoken the rich lines in a voice that betrayed the capacity to be intoxicated by poetry: and of such capacity I had found no trace in my class-mates. I felt immediate sympathy, and besides anyone foreign who brought a breath from a world outside the world of habit ever attracted me.

It must not be supposed that the words of Shakespeare were spoken out "of the blue," deliberately challenging an interval of silence. They came with startling aptness, but they came in response to a question. The school was St. Paul's, then lately removed from its ancient quarters in the City, which I myself still perversely lamented, for what amplitude of play-fields could make up for those solitary rambles about the by-ways of Cheapside, the towers and spires, the shipping in the Thames, the crowds and animation, the sense of history, of being in the centre of things, the deep-toned bells of the Cathedral sounding down the smoky air, the little seclusions of peace in the church-yard, the glory of the spaciousness beneath the dome? These had been my dreamy haunts. We had been transferred to Hammersmith and prose. I was then in the seventh form, under the Sur-Master, Mr. Lupton, who on this occasion was reading with us the *Æneid*. With the perhaps laudable aim of enlarging our vocabulary, he would press upon our reluctant or apathetic taste a choice of poetical epithets, such as Tennyson (whom, like everybody among our elders, so far as my experience went, he idolised) would employ to



dress up his thoughts in. Thus we were enjoined to speak of steeds rather than horses; not a sword, but a falchion; and on this particular occasion he suggested that livery might be a more sumptuous, Virgilian word than clothes or dress. Could not one of us recall such a use of the word in our classics? He paused for a reply, expecting no doubt that, as usually happened, he would be reduced to supplying the apt quotation himself. But the reply came, and I think he was just a little disconcerted when the Prince of Morocco's appeal vibrated with such intensity of tone through the silent and astonished class room. Its dramatic emotion was something un-English! We were not used to such things.

Manmohan Ghose and I made friends, and by degrees disclosed to each other our secret ambitions. We had long walks and talks together, discussing everything in heaven and earth, after the manner of youth, but especially poetry and the poets. My home was indifferent to the arts, my school fellows also, so far as I knew them: and it was a delight to expand in these talks on the subjects I cared for most. We had enough difference of taste to salt our conversation with arguments and dispute. At that time I was in the stage of an ardent worship of Browning, but I think he never shared this enthusiasm.

He lived in lodgings with two brothers, but what his actual circumstances were when he came to England, and how he came to be at St. Paul's, I do not think I ever enquired. As to the school, the High Master, a notable and formidable personality famous for his prescience in judging of a boy's future capabilities, would at times, for his own reasons, insert a promising pupil into one of the upper forms without notice, and in the middle of the term: hence my unconsciousness of having ever set eyes on Manmohan Ghose till all our heads were turned to the strange new-comer on that particular morning is not so improbable as it may seem. But of Ghose's background I knew scarcely anything. His enthusiasm for literature sufficed my curiosity. He was well read in the English poets, better read than I in the Elizabethans and the older lyrists. But what struck me most was his enthusiastic appreciation of Greek poetry, not so much the books prescribed in the school as those which he had sought out on his own account. Theocritus, Meleager, above all Simonides, were his special favourites. I had imagined that an Oriental's taste must of necessity be for the luxuriant and ornate, and was surprised that he should feel so strong an attraction to the limpid and severe. Yet many of us are attracted to arts and literatures remote from our own traditions and just because of qualities in them which these have not. Why should not an Indian feel a parallel attraction? Manmohan Ghose never forgot the Greeks, and to the end his delight was in European literature and European art.



I still remember the pleasure I had when he showed me this little poem: an echo from the Greek, but made his own.

Over thy head, in joyful wanderings
Through heaven's wide spaces, free,
Birds fly with music in their wings,
And from the blue rough sea
The fishes flash and leap;
There is a life of loveliest things
O'er thee so fast asleep.
In the deep West the heavens grow heavenlier
Eve after eve; and still
The glorious stars remember to appear;
The roses on the hill
Are fragrant as before;
Only thy face of all that's dear
I shall see never more.

Though not such a brilliant scholar as his younger brother, Arabinda, who has become famous in other fields than the classics, Manmohan won an open scholarship at Christ Church and went up to Oxford in 1887. I remained at school for another year. He had rooms in Peckwater Quad, at the top of his staircase: and there, on my going up to Trinity, I would find him sitting over the fire with a book, ever ready for animated discussion, which a friend from his own college would sometimes come in to join. I suppose he subsisted on an allowance, but he seemed to float in an atmosphere to which material things were strange. One day at the beginning of the term he called on me to borrow a postage stamp, in order to write home for funds which he had forgotten. He had arrived in Oxford with a florin and some coppers on which to start the term, and having given the florin by mistake to a porter, he had nothing but two pence to give the driver of his hansom on alighting at Tom Tower. He explained this to the cabman with some philosophic consolations, which left him too astonished to expostulate.

I recall an evening in the rooms of Percy Dearmer, at Christ Church, when there was a large gathering, chiefly to entertain some members of Frank Benson's Company, who were acting at the theatre. My cousin, Stephen Phillips, then remarkably handsome, was one of them. Lionel Johnson, curiously small and neat, was there; and his nervous mouth, the pallor of his face, the intent eyes, as of one who never slept, the air of dominating intellect and learning combined with the extreme youthfulness of his person, made a singular impression. And I can still hear Manmohan Ghose standing



up to read a poem in the crowded room; his long hair fell half over his eyes; as he read he detached one of his dark locks, and pulled at it with outstretched hand: oblivious of his surroundings, lost in the poem, he appeared almost convulsed in the emotional effort of its delivery.

In the summer term of 1890 Mr. Blackwell published a little volume bound in brown paper for which Selwyn Image had made an exquisite design. It was called *Primavera*, and was the joint production of Stephen Phillips, Manmohan Ghose, Arthur Cripps, of Trinity, and myself. It was received with the indulgence often accorded to such youthful efforts, and was soon in a second edition.

Addington Symonds reviewed us kindly and, at length, in the *Academy*. Oscar Wilde in the *Pall Mall Gazette* was no less favourable, and had particular praise for the "young Indian of brilliant scholarship and high literary attainment who gives some culture to Christ Church". Mr. Ghose, he said, ought some day to make a name in our literature. Not long after this, I think, Ghose went down to live in London. As we were at different colleges, and were not of the same year, I had seen much less of him at Oxford than at school, and now for some time he was largely lost to view, for my home was in the country. We exchanged poems and criticisms, and on visits to London I met him in company with artists and men of letters, whom he had come to know through Lionel Johnson, Ernest Dowson, and others of our contemporaries. At one time he thought of seeking a post of some kind in England, but nothing came of such projects. Not all his time was spent in London; he knew something of the more beautiful parts of England and of Wales, and cherished the memory of them. Yet he could not forget that he was an exile.

Heaven be in thy sails, O unknown vessel,
Till those heavenly shores grow into view.
See my spirit, with no storm to wrestle,
Follows, goes on wind-wings thither too.

For long miles into the heart of morning,
Miles and miles, far over land and seas,
Past enchanted regions of forewarning,
Dawns at last the land that dims all these.

So he cried in a poem written in these last years before leaving England for ever. Alas! it was not long before he was to feel that his spirit had exchanged one exile for another. During the last year of this period, being now settled in London, I saw him frequently. He was unoccupied, I think, except for verse-making, and would



drift into my room at odd hours, and stay talking till late into the night.

The ship which in the autumn of 1894 bore Manmohan Ghose down the Thames estuary and the Channel on his journey home was named, I recall, *Patroclus*. It seems traditional with ship-builders to christen their grimy-funnelled iron monsters with such legendary names. But in this case there seemed something symbolic in the attachment of a name, breathing of bright Hellas and the Tale of Troy, to the efficient product of a practical civilisation made with sole thought of use and comfort. There went gliding the big liner, a prodigious piece of throbbing mechanism, the modern West's achievement and pride; painted on her bows was a relic of old poetry and lettered tradition, just as our restless civilisation still carries with it, hoarded in a few brains, cherished in a few imaginations, the heritage of Greece, no more to the multitude than a painted name with the dimmest of associations; and on board was an Indian poet, to whom the *Iliad* and the name of Achilles' friend meant more perhaps than to any of his English co-voyagers; a young Indian returning to an unknown home, for whom the English cliffs and the roar of London and the whole hurried stream of western life were inextricably to be mingled in memory with the glory of the classics of Europe.

"I arrived on October 25th, and have since been staying at a beautiful country place called Baidyanath, in my grandfathers house, all among the mountains and green sugar-cane fields and shallow rivers. My own people I found charming and cultivated folk, and spent an extremely pleasant time among them. This, I think very fortunate indeed—to find at once friends, and that of one's own blood, so congenial and interesting as soon as I landed."

Such was Manmohan's first happy impression, on his return to his own country. The one drawback he lamented was that he had forgotten his own tongue, Bengali, and had to learn it afresh. But I imagine that all his life he thought in English. He soon obtained a post as Professor of English Literature at Patna College. It was dull, fatiguing, ill-paid work. His consolation was in the country and the climate. A letter of the following year speaks for itself.

"We have a few holidays, for the festival in honour of the Goddess Durga. Hinduism is a curious thing. I never realised what mediaeval Europe was like till I came to India. It stirs a strange curiosity in one to live surrounded by these morbid and corroding superstitions. Autumn and the rains are nearly over, with a sky washed for the light to revel in. The seasons, at any rate, are forever beautiful, in spite of man and his diseases. After the parching heat of June and the delicious rain of August, the earth seems possessed with a passion for verdure. It is like April in

England, only more wonderful. Green things are indeed wonderful here, but brown things (that is, man!) are absurdly out of sympathy with me, at least socially: from the outside, I confess they are full of interest; so that in the midst of all this plenitude of bloom, I often remember dingy London and then

"Surgit amari aliquid quod in ipsis floribus angat."

From a letter of 1896:

"Yes, the pestilence we had here in early summer was truly dreadful. I used to walk out to the Ganges at dusk, when college was over, to escape from the hot city and breathe the pure almost mountain-sweet air that comes across such a vast sheet of water. But it was vain to seek escape from men and mortality. Here all along the softly washing banks of the river, a myriad fires appeared in the summer night, where the dead bodies were being burnt—lovely flames in the distance, merely, if you could but stop yourself from approaching them. Near at hand, it was indescribably tragic and wonderful; groups of figures in the darkness, luridly revealed or in shadow; men standing in a dreadful silence, women hanging passionately over the dead or shrilly wailing; the swathed white corpses on the ground, some lifting them on the pyres, others applying the torch—every variety of attitude that expresses grief, desolation and despair."

In February, 1897 (he had now been transferred from Patna), he writes: "You ask how I like Calcutta. All peopled places are wonderful, and this not the least so. After the silence of Bankipore, there is a little stir here—a rumour of some great world beyond the moon, and ship-masts in the river. One of my pupils (Indian boys are most imaginative) goes down every morning with me to see those wonderful ship-masts, and his eyes light with ecstasy at the magic sound of Europe! The vast river too has followed me here, as broad and shining as ever. Often I go at day-break to stand and see the sun rise out of mist and water, drinking the silence of the fresh air, the divine earliness of morning, $\eta\omega\varsigma\ \eta\pi\epsilon\upsilon\epsilon\upsilon\epsilon\iota\alpha$. But then, too, I get tired of all this, and long insatiably for some intellectual excitement, to have someone to talk about poetry with. There are people, of course, and plenty of charming enthusiasm (I have never been amongst a race so sensitive to poetry), but there is no true understanding of things."

"The magic sound of Europe!"

Sharp indeed was the contrast between this strange land which was yet his own, and the western country of his memories, still so recent. England had given him much, and to the best she had to give a singularly receptive spirit had responded with delight. Her poetry glorified England for this stranger from the East. West her last



gift to be the cruel gift of estrangement from his people? No doubt with passing years he grew to be more at home in Indian life: he made it one of his objects: but for long there were frequent moments of keen repining.

Yet after all he was Indian in his nature. His verse follows the forms and traditions of English poetry, but his temperament and attitude were Eastern. Physically he responded joyfully to the congenial ardour of the Indian climate. What a glorious pleasure the sun, and the heat of the sun! He revelled in the floods of sunlight, the luxuriant leafiness. The country itself was full of charm and romance; he loved the primeval simplicity of the people and their life. Only he remained outside it. Mentally, he was torn in two. I often urged him to take a theme from Indian legend; and he attempted a poem on Savitri among other Indian subjects. But it would not shape itself. He felt the need to Europeanise the atmosphere in some sort, and then the essence evaporated. Thus he hovered between two hemispheres, not wholly belonging to either.

In one respect, in his acceptance of tradition, he was certainly more Oriental than Western. I had given him at parting Bullen's Lyrics from the Elizabethan Song Books, and he found in these, and in Campion especially, an unceasing delight. "How we have sacrificed form and expression in our devotion for modern thought and for contemporary subject matter, and the idea that a poet should have something new to say! How did people first come to have this idea? The Elizabethans don't seem to trouble themselves much about having a new poetical mission. What old and time-worn subjects they chose, seeming evidently to care for nothing except for rhythm and expression, on which they spend the whole power of their art."

Love Songs and Elegies by Manmohan Ghose appeared in 1898 in Mr. Elkin Mathew's Shilling Garland. This little book was all that he was to publish except some occasional poems in magazines. He was now at Dacca where he was professor for some five years. Then for a time (from 1902) he was promoted Inspector of Schools and travelled about his district of Chota Nagpore. One of his letters described with some humour long uncomfortable journeys in remote parts of the district—journeys by night in an ox-cart in which he lay jolted and full of apprehension of tigers, and turned out shivering in the morning to examine a squad of children under a hedge in Tennyson's "Princess", a poem he disliked. Did the ghost of Lord Macaulay smile complacently on that incongruous scene?

Finally, Ghose was appointed professor at Presidency College, Calcutta. Our correspondence had lapsed. For many years I heard

nothing from him. I knew that he was married; I learnt later, that his wife was an invalid.

At last, during the war, he wrote. I then learnt the full tragedy that had befallen him. The beautiful and happy-natured wife, whom he worshipped with an extreme devotion, had been stricken ten years before with a mysterious nervous ailment, completely depriving her of speech, paralysing her right limbs and causing aversion from all food. For a space of five years there was a partial recovery, then the malady which was combined with hysteric symptoms resumed its mastery. Day after day till the release of death, Manmohan's entire life was divided between his college lecture-room and the sick-room, where he devoted himself with unending patience to attending on the beloved sufferer. The prolonged nervous strain resulted in utter fatigue, utter despondency, and finally broke his health. The renunciation of all society prevented any compensating distraction. "For years not a friendly step has crossed my threshold. With English people in India there can be only a nodding acquaintance or official connection, and with Indians my purely English up-bringing and breeding puts me out of harmony; denationalised, that is their word for me."

Love, harmony, happiness, he had found; home had become home at last; and then, in so brief a space, this had been taken from him.

Poetry and his children—two daughters—were his consolation. He continued to write, though he never cared to publish. Apart from his fellows, knowing little of the currents of contemporary literature, with no help from friendly criticism, he wrote verse which sometimes showed little signs of his isolation, in being out of touch with the most exacting standards. A tendency to become obscure from grammatical inversion, to indulge in a certain prolixity, occasional failure to cope with elaborate rhyme-structure—but he would set himself tasks in intricate and dissyllabic rhyming which would have daunted most English poets—these blemishes might easily have disappeared in revision which he did not live to make. The devotion of his love for his wife, the desolation of his loss, inspired the groups of poems called "Immortal Eve" and "Orphic Mysteries", containing the finest and most original of his lyrics.

During all these heavily burdened years he never relaxed for a moment in his duties as a professor. His habitual reserve and aloofness caused him to be regarded by strangers as cold and austere; in reality, as those few who came to know him in his home discovered, he was simple, natural, affectionate and sympathetic. But he did not invite familiarity. To his pupils he seemed always to breathe a world of his own: they admired him from afar as he emerged from a

mysterious seclusion and spoke, not as if to them, but to some ideal audience. It was as if they overheard his soliloquies. Those who were not in his class passionately envied those who were. All testify to the extraordinary fascination of his lectures. His mere voice, as he read or recited poetry, took them with a spell. His powers came not so much from the felicity of his phrasing as from the entire faith he had in what he held up for admiration; his possession by its beauty. "If the highest test of a teacher," writes one ex-pupil, "be to create an attitude of mind, then Ghose was the teacher par excellence." Another writes that he would cherish his memory even more as a creative teacher than as a poet and scholar.

To hundreds and hundreds of young Indians he opened a magic door away from the class-rooms and text-books, and through him they heard the poets of our country speak as with living voices.

In 1918 Ghose's health, broken by the shock of his wife's death, failed completely. Repeated illnesses were followed by a gradual loss of eye-sight. One of his keenest pleasures was in pictures and sculpture. In the earlier years after his return to India, he had spent much of his savings on photographs and books of reproductions which I sent him from Italy or London. He would spend happy evenings contemplating them. But now these, and the beauty of the sky and flowers, were taken from him. In 1921 he was obliged to retire. For years he had been looking forward to freedom from the irksome routine of his profession, in order to write at ease. Even now, blinded, broken in health, and prematurely aged, he remained courageous and serene. He continued to compose poetry, and he looked forward to accomplishing a cherished dream of returning to England, the beloved nurse of his youth. His passage was taken for a date in March, 1924. But on January 4th he died. As he lay dying "Lear" and "Macbeth" were read aloud to him at his own desire. He was not yet fifty-five.

Would Manmohan Ghose have achieved more if he had been a purely Indian poet—if his father, with a whole-hearted faith in Western culture, had not transplanted him to England at the tender age of seven, so that all his most impressionable years were spent in a foreign country? Perhaps; for on his return to India he wrote English verse in surroundings from which they drew no natural nourishment, and his isolation hampered him. He began a drama on the story of Nala and Damayanti, which was never finished; but otherwise his poems were little concerned with India. They were full of English imagery, of the trees and flowers of England. Circumstances had prevented him from being like Rabindra Nath Tagore, an interpreter to the West of Indian thought and life. But at least

he was an eloquent interpreter of the West to India. He admired the Bengali language, but it seemed to him lacking in a certain quality which he found in English. No Indian had ever before used our tongue with so poetic a touch, and he would coin a phrase, turn a noun into a verb with the freedom, often the felicity, of our own poets. But he remains Indian. I do not think that an Indian reader would feel him as a foreign poet, for all his western tastes and allusions. Yet to us he is a voice among the great company of English singers; somewhat apart and solitary, with a difference in his note, but not an echo. I hope that fate, so malignant to him in his life-time, may not pursue him after death with the hasty and cheap criticism that his verse is neither Indian nor English, and so dismiss it. On the contrary, it is both Indian and English; that is its interest. We English, ready enough to adorn with haloes of romance any country not our own that is sufficiently far off, are apt to feel embarrassed and incredulous if a like tribute is offered to our own land. But why this coyness? We are vain of our efficiency in business and administration, and parade it before the Eastern world. Is it not something for pride also that England could be to this Indian a nursing-mother of imagination and the dear home of the Muses? Yet with English people I fancy that the Orientalism of a Flecker or a Lafcadio Hearn finds much readier sympathy than the romantic admiration of England that inspired Manmohan Ghose. I remember that I myself was quite annoyed with him for persisting in choosing a Greek legend, Perseus, for the subject of a long poem rather than an Indian one. How unreasonable this was! I should not have been annoyed with myself for wanting to write a poem on Savitri or Nala and Damayanti. Let us become acquainted with the riches of India's tradition by all means, but let us make exchange of our own best also, and regard with sympathy the effort of one like Ghose, for whom England was above all the country of immortal poets. Oscar Wilde wrote of his early poems: "His verses show how quick and subtle are the intellectual sympathies of the Oriental mind, and suggest how close is the bond of union that may some day bind India to us by other methods than those of commerce and military strength!" Was this a fond aspiration? Not so fond as the delusions of those who think only in terms of politics and business.

I think of Manmohan Ghose as I first saw him, breaking the silence of our classroom with his fervent Shakespearean appeal; I think of his isolation in his own country, dazzled by the glory of its sky, but restless with cravings of the mind; of his strange, doubly-exiled lot; of the tragic succession of disappointments and disasters that befell him; above all of his unfaltering fidelity to a chosen ideal,



INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR

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his inner secret of serenity and fortitude, and I remember the lines in the *Poet's Epitaph*:

He is retired as noonday dew
Or fountain in a noonday grove;
And you must love him ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love.

LAURENCE BINYON.



PRIMAVERA

PRIMAVERA

I

DIM WITH OUTGROWN FLOWERS

Dim with outgrown flowers sweet boyhood stretches behind me;
Breaking fresh at my feet, lies, like an ocean, the world.
And despised seem, now, those quiet fields I have travell'd:
Eager to thee I turn, Life, and thy visions of joy.
Fame I see, with her wreath, far off approaching to crown me;
Love, whose starry eyes fever my heart with desire:
And impassion'd, I yearn for the future, all unconscious,
Ah, poor dreamer! what ills life in its circle enfolds.
Not more restless the boy, whose eager, confident bosom
The wide, unknown sea fills with a hunger to roam.
Often beside the surge of the desolate ocean he paces;
Ingrate, dreams of a sky brighter, serener than his.
Passionate soul! light holds he a mother's tearful entreaties,
Lightly leaves he behind all the sad faces of home;
Never again, perchance, to behold them; lost in the tempest,
Or on some tropic shore dying in fever and pain!



EARLY POEMS

II

RAYMOND AND IDA

Raymond

Dearest, that sit'st in dreams,
Through the window look, this way.
How changed and desolate seems
The world, Ida, to-day;
Heavy and low the sky is glooming:
Winter is coming!

Ida

My dreaming heart is stirred:
Sadly the winter comes!
The wind is loud: how weird
Heard in these darken'd rooms!
Speak to me, Raymond! ease this dread:
I am afraid, afraid.

Raymond

Love, what is this? Like snow
Thy cheeks feel, snow they wear.
What ails my darling so?
What is it thou dost hear?
Close, close, thy soft arms cling to mine:
Tears on thy lashes shine.

Ida

Hark! love, the wind wails by
The wet October trees
Swaying them mournfully:
The wet leaves shower and cease.
And hark! how blows the weary rain
Against the shaken pane.



PRIMAVERA

Raymond

Ab. yes, the world is drear
Outside; there is no rest.
But what can Ida fear,
Shelter'd upon my breast?
Heed not the storm-blast, beating wild,
I love thee, love thee, child!

Ida

Thy breath is in my hair,
Thy kisses on my cheek;
Yet I scarce feel them there:
Faintly I hear thee speak.
My heart is dreaming far away,
In some sad, future day.

Raymond

The future? In the mist
Of years what dost thou see?
O let that dark land rest:
Come back, come back to me!
Look up! How fix'd and vacant seem
Thine eyes; so deep they dream.

Ida

To leave the blessed light:
Cold in the grave to lie!
No voice, no human sight:
Darkness and apathy!
To die! 'tis hard, ere youth is o'er;
But ah. to love no more!

Raymond

What dream is this, alas!
O, if but for my sake,
Wake darling! let this pass:
Ida, dear Ida, wake!
I cannot bear to see those tears:
Thy sad tones hurt my ears.



EARLY POEMS

Ida

Will he forget me, then,
When I am gone away?
'Twere best: to give him pain,
Let not my memory stay.
But O, even there, in Hades dim,
I would remember him.

Raymond

Thou griev'st thyself in vain:
Sweet love, be comforted.
Come, leave this world of rain;
To the bright hearth turn thy head.
We have our fireside still, the same:
How cheerful is the flame!

Though darkness round us press;
Though wild, without, it blows;
Here sit thee, while thy face
In the happy firelight glows:
Clasp'd in my arms, lie tranquil here;
And listen, Ida dear.

As, from that outlook chill.
The glad hearth meets our sight,
A charm for every ill
We bear, a charm of might.
Ah, 'gainst its power not death shall stay!
Know'st thou it, darling, say?

Thou smilest! Joy, I see,
Dawns in thine eyes again:
Those cheeks of ivory
Their own sweet bloom regain.
Thou know'st that heavenly charm; how well,
Thy happy kisses tell!



PRIMAVERA

III

A LAMENT

Over thy head, in joyful wanderings
Through heaven's wide spaces, free,
Birds fly with music in their wings;
And from the blue, rough sea
The fishes flash and leap;
There is a life of loveliest things
O'er thee, so fast asleep.

In the deep West the heavens grow heavenlier,
Eve after eve; and still
The glorious stars remember to appear;
The roses on the hill
Are fragrant as before:
Only thy face, of all that's dear,
I shall see never more!



EARLY POEMS

IV

Thou who hast follow'd far with eyes of love
The shy and virgin sights of Spring to-day,
Sad soul, what dost thou in this happy grove?
Hast thou no pipe to touch, no strain to play,
Where Nature smiles so fair and seems to ask a lay?

Ah, she needs none! she is too beautiful.
How should I sing her? for my heart would tire,
Seeking a lovelier verse each time to cull,
In striving still to pitch my music higher:
Lovelier than any muse is she who gives the fire!

No impulse I beseech; my strains are vile!
To escape thee, Nature, restless here I rove.
Look not so sweet on me, avert thy smile!
O cease at length this fevered breast to move!
I have loved thee in vain; I cannot speak my love.

Here sense with apathy seems gently wed:
The gloom is starr'd with flowers; the unseen trees
Spread thick and softly real above my head;
And the far birds add music to the peace
In this dark place of sleep where whispers never cease.

Hush, then, my pipe; vain is thy passion here;
Vain is the burning bosom of desire!
Forever hushed, let me this silence hear,
As a sad Muse in the melodious choir
Hushes her voice, to catch the happier voices by her.

Deep-shaded will I lie, and deeper yet
In night, where not a leaf its neighbour knows;
Forget the shining of the stars, forget
The vernal visitation of the rose;
And, far from all delights, prepare my heart's repose.

Strive how I may, I cannot slumber so:
Still burns that sleepless beauty on the mind;
Still insupportable those visions glow;
And hark! my spirit's aspirations find
An answer in the leaves, a warning on the wind.



PRIMAVERA

'O crave not silence thou! too soon, too sure
Shall Autumn come and through these branches weep:
Soon birds shall cease, and flowers no more endure;
And thou beneath the mould unwilling creep,
And silent soon shalt be in that eternal sleep.

'Green still it is, where that fair goddess strays;
Then follow, till around thee all be sere.
Lose not a vision of her passing face;
Nor miss the sound of her soft robes, that here
Sweep over the wet leaves of the fast-falling year.'



EARLY POEMS

V

MENTEM MORTALIA TANGUNT

Now lonely is the wood:
No flowers now linger, none!
The virgin sisterhood
Of roses, all are gone;
Now Autumn sheds her latest leaf;
And in my heart is grief.

Ah me, for all earth rears,
The appointed bound is placed!
After a thousand years
The great oak falls at last:
And thou, more lovely, canst not stay,
Sweet rose, beyond thy day.

Our life is not the life
Of roses and of leaves;
Else wherefore this deep strife,
This pain, our soul conceives?
The fall of ev'n such short-lived things
To us some sorrow brings.

And yet, plant, bird, and fly
Feel no such hidden fire.
Happy they live; and die
Happy, with no desire.
They in their brief life have fulfilled
All Nature in them willed.

And were we also made
Of like terrestrial mould
We should not be afraid,
Nor feel the grave so cold;
But, all oblivious of our fate
Live sweetly out our date.

MENTEM MORTALIA TANGUNT
(VI)

Now lonely is the wood
No flower now lingers none
The virgin sisterhood
Of roses all are gone
Now Autumn sheds her latest leaf
And in my heart is grief.

Ah me, for all earth rears
The appointed ^{ground} ~~down~~ is placed
After a thousand years
The great oak falls at last
And thou, more lovely, canst not stay
Sweet rose, beyond thy day.

Our life is not the life
Of roses and of leaves
Else wherefore this deep strife
This pain our soul ~~that~~ ^{conquers} ~~conquers~~
The fall of even such short-lived things
To us some sorrow brings

the warmth with which he greets me, and from what
 he told Stephen, Oscar appears to have taken
 a great liking to me. His notice of me in the
Pall Mall shows that, I think. And when
 I went to see him the other day, he was most
 kind and affectionate. He upbraided me much
 "for not coming to see him before, and when
 he heard that I had been going about vainly
 in search of employment, was very anxious
 to do something for me. He wished to write
 to several editors and get me some reviewing
 -work to do. It was too late ^{to} ~~for~~ get a holiday
 Tutorship or else he would have done that for me.
 He was quite charmed with my design for a
 short Indian tale. "I should advise you", he
 said, "to make a bold bid for the public favour.
 With your beautiful English and your Oriental
 name you ought to strike people's fancy. Write
 this tale, and make it rich, striking and
 concentrated and ^{send it} ~~send it~~ to me: I will
 get it into the Quarterly Review or some other
 Magazine for you. I am going to France for
 a week or so, and ^{at} then we shall be able
 to ^{take counsel} ~~carry out our~~ together and carry out our
 little plans. I hope to see much more of you
 then." This is very generous and charming
 of him, is it not? If he likes, Oscar can prove
 a most useful friend; for he knows almost
 everybody. M^{rs} Wilde, too, is ~~very~~ well-connected
 and moves in very high circles; so that, as regards



PRIMAVERA

For the great mother loves
Her children far too well;
'These longings that she moves
Their own fulfilment tell:
She would not burden us with aught
We really needed not.

O, not in vain she gave
To the wild birds their wings!
They spread them forth and have
Heaven for their wanderings.
But we, to whom no wings are given
Why seek we for a Heaven?

And, when far o'er us fly
Those voyagers of the air,
Why must we gaze and sigh,
"O would that I were there!"
Why are we restless, ill content,
Tied to one element?

'Tis not that in our tears
Some happier life we crave;
Our happiest, sweetest years
Mysterious moments have:
The sense of our brief human lot
Clings to us, haunts our thought.

O then this pleasant earth
Seems but an alien thing:
Faint grows her busy mirth;
Far hence our thoughts take wing:
For some enduring home we cry!
She cannot satisfy,

Or bind us: only ties
Immortal found can bless;
Only in loving eyes
We see our happiness;
Only upon a loving breast
Our souls find any rest.



EARLY POEMS

Why thirsts the spirit so
For life? what moves it thus?
'Tis her voice! yes, I know,
'Tis Nature cries in us:
'Tis no unholy strife of ours
Against forbidding powers.

What though we gaze with fear,
So blank death seems to be;
What though no land appear
Beyond that lonely sea;
Still in our hearts her cry doth stay;
She will find out a way.

So in the chrysalis
Slumber those lovely wings;
So from the shell it is
The dazzling pearls she brings:
Her glorious works she works alone,
Unfathomed, and unknown!

LOVE SONGS AND ELEGIES



LOVE SONGS AND ELEGIES

VI

Heap ruby upon amethyst,
Exhaust the deep seas of their pearl:
My lips are richer, being kissed
By the sweet rose lips of a girl.

Her heart is white with angel truth,
Her heart is red with love's own fire;
She is the snowdrop of my youth,
She is the rose of my desire.

VII

Above her, hushed, the green, sweet darkness thrills:
Cool waters in her ear come fresheningly;
Unclouding, like a moon, Irene feels
The fearless glory to be simply she.

All that the sun, impassioned, leaps to kiss
She gravely gives; and to the light complete,
Stands lovely, with no shame to tinge her bliss.
Eve in her Paradise was not so sweet.

What charm now, sister in simplicity
To noble flowers, with shame's false tyranny done,
Glorying in her sweet humanity
With grass, earth, air and sunlight to be one!

Glowing she stands in the pure face of heaven,
In marriage with enchanted Nature given!



EARLY POEMS

VIII

Great wealth once was mine,
Riches such as keep
Not the Atlantic waves,
Memory, nor Sleep.

Wealth so great, so vast
Never back to me
Ocean waves can wash,
Sleep nor Memory.

Once my own sweet thoughts
Seemed like richest gold;
But to breathe, more rich,
Once, than hoards untold.

Youth and health; the flowers;
Peace; the stars above;
Ev'n my heart, 'twas mine,
Ere I met with Love.

From all bitter shafts
Safe, 'twas mine to be.
Ev'n from her bright eyes,
Ere Love met with me.

Till like some great king,
Now in battle deemed
Resistless, earth to me
One green empire seemed.

But to bring me sleep
Day in purple ceased;
And for my fresh eyes
Rubies dropped the east.

In the gardens of bliss
The nightingale did moan,
And it seemed his throat
Throbbled for me alone.



LOVE SONGS AND ELEGIES

For me, for me alone,
Skies and clouds and day,
The sweet, solemn world
Did its great pageant play.

All my own I was:
Like a flower apart,
Dwelt in its own breath
To itself my heart.

Love, the lord of things,
To whom bends in awe
The whole earth, from his heavens
All my glory saw.

Love, the lord of things,
All my riches viewed
And, disdainfully
Smiling, by me stood.

O how beautiful
Shone he, fierce like gold;
Insupportable
Even to behold!

All my hoarded wealth;
Trees, thoughts, flowers, my lone
Estates; this wide earth;
All that seemed my own;

To her, the world's dear queen,
Her, to whom in strong
Tenure, all things rare
And beautiful belong.

To her hands, like gifts,
Night and sleep and wave,
The roses, even my heart,
All, to her he gave.

All my idle robes
Stripped he, and my shame;
My soul's nakedness
Drest in burning flame.



EARLY POEMS

I who for myself
Once sufficed indeed—
Of another now
O what utter need!

Beggared, poor, despised,
Now I go to wait
Hungry, at her full
Doors, and supplicate

From her eyes divine,
One dear shaft of bliss;
From her lips so rich
The fragment of a kiss.



LOVE SONGS AND ELEGIES

IX

Heart, my heart, so fond to linger,
Come away!
Once with beckoning finger,
Sweetly once she bade thee stay.
Once what heavenly bliss was thine,
All her love, and poured like wine!
Come, O come, make no delay.

Hers are those bright looks she gave thee,
Hers alone!
What can lingering save thee?
This sweet touch or that soft tone?
Love no tearful claim can make:
Hers to give and hers to take;
Yes, the kisses all her own.

O the wealth that back she closes!
Lips divine!
Cheeks, my only roses,
Eyes, that Hesperus outshine!
All her sweetness takes she home:
Back into my bosom come,
Heart, my heart, for thou art mine.

Out, alas! I do remember:
Hers thou art!
Given that rich September.
Never from her breast to part.
Bitter, bitter is thy lot,
To be hers that loves thee not,
Mine no longer, breaking heart!



EARLY POEMS

X

THE KISS OF CUPID

Shaded soft in greenest day
Beauty found her:
Dimness all around her,
Like a sunbeam down she lay.
Her crimson cheek had drooped, oppressed,
To the flowers, in happy rest,
Her tired eyes bequeathing:
Breezes her sweet tresses kept;
Leaves took vigil: and she slept,
Softly breathing.

Lightly by Love laughing came,
Light leaves under:
Stood in passionate wonder,
Held above her like a flame.
Sleeping, but one arm in charge;
Dreamless lay her eyelids large,
Mouth like petals drifted.
Quivering stood he, while her breast,
Heaving for his heart's unrest,
Sank and lifted.

Down he knelt, and softly crept
Towards the sleeper;
Drank the glory deeper.
"O, one little kiss!" he wept;
"Twixt my golden wings I glow;
Thou art white and cool, like snow,
Soothe me, sleep's own sister!"
Breathing her sweet breath he knelt,
And with lips that, creeping, felt,
Richly kissed her.

One more! Watch there's none to keep!—
Back he started!
O'er her, wings disparted,
Hung the soft and shadowy Sleep;



LOVE SONGS AND ELEGIES

Murmuring, "O, what hast thou done,
Love, that moon and earth and sun
Back to chaos beatest:
Troubling with that kiss of flame
All that's softest in my name,
All that's sweetest! "



EARLY POEMS

XI

MYVANWY

Spring, that in greenest shade, all wet, unguessed by any,
Hidest some flower, to sway for the cool showery breeze,
Now that Myvanwy's face the great thronged city sees,
Hast thou a blossom yet more fresh and rainy?

Ocean-cave, that never through dimmest water dayward
Thy bright pearl sufferest, where sea-weed forests keep
Safe from the diver's hand the radiance of the deep,
How shall I keep her heart so wild and wayward?

Unrebuked as the breeze, so joyous is she, a creature
So like the wild, free things of the pure forest, a part
Of mountain and fern, that I tremble to think her heart
Into green leaves should glide and be lost in Nature.

O so beautiful is her every step and motion,
Surely the earth must feel and quiver at her tread!
And O, the grace of her hand, the poise of her head!
Surely the air must know it and thrill with emotion.

Out in the garish noon she walks, and such light presses
On my faint heart, that I scarce for gazing see!
Lost in the black shadow of my love's jealousy,
I grudge her cheek to the sun, her hair to the breezes.

Street, all thronged with eyes, ah! look not so at Myvanwy!
Life, that streamest on so various and bright,
Cease, for thou wooest, but canst not win her sight!
World, she must not be thine, forget thy envy!

Yet O, so bright and so white is she, and I so lowly,
Green Spring, I fear, or the world may steal her yet,
Would that I knew her heart, what pansy or violet
'Tis that its workings rules, to what snowdrops holy!

Peace, poor heart, torment not thyself with vain endeavour.
Dost thou not know her heart? So warm and so proud, 'twould
break,

The hand that confides in hers a moment to forsake!
Once what Myvanwy loves, she loves for ever!



LOVE SONGS AND ELEGIES

XII

THE ORCHARD

O lateness sweeter than May's first hope, O unexpected September!
Thy sweetness how shall I tell?
O laden orchard, O bending chance, and she in the fruited bower!
True as the ripening peach to its taste is destiny to her hour.
Love, ripened yesterday, fell:
Its utter sweetness let me remember.

In the sacred hush of a maiden's mien is shut her spirit's emotion,
Remote in the stars of her eyes.
How feeds the tongue-tied lover his gaze at her heaven's far lustrous
fire!
By her softly breaking sea he dreams, and trembles with his desire.
For the passionate pearls he sighs
In the peaceful depths of that silent ocean.

Vainly! But to the one ripe hour his bliss shall destiny envy,
Her sweetness, in green leaves now.
Ah myriad, myriad seemed the days and months how vainly I sighed,
And the very summer sank to my heart, and flower by flower hope
died:
But late, to the one sere bough
Deeper than autumn coloured Myvanwy.

'Twas all an orchard. Wild as the leaves that gold to the falling
fluttered,
With desperate, swayed desire,
To her bright, irrevocable face, as pale and departing she stood,
I leaned as the burning autumn leans to the sun in the blossomless
wood;
In her dreaming ear my fire,
My breaking heart in her ear I uttered.

EARLY POEMS

It seemed with the passion of my words the dusk of the thicket was
rifting,

The expecting leaves were hushed,
When O, the wonder! the sudden bliss! as if the shadow-grown peach
Above me, suddenly, without sun, should colour deep at my speech,
She turned, ah! sweetly she blushed!
Her glorious eyes upon me she lifted

Full of infinite pity and love. In the gorgeous waning September
I swerved, too happy to look,
And whilst, as if heavy-fruited, my heart hung laden with its romance,
Hesitating to me she came where hushed I stood in a trance,
My hand in her hand took
As in a dream too sweet to remember.

Its bashful boughs and its conscious leaves do the red of apples bury,
Its mist the purple of plums,
The heart of a girl from day's broad eye, the gaudy curious light,
In a shadow stiller than August hangs her pity and shame and delight;
But her, O, her speech comes
Sweet and direct as the taste of a cherry.

O me, what cruel misery then for my useless sake did you suffer,
Dearest, what helpless pain.
Forgive me, forgive me! Do but see how washed with the storm
and wet,
Ripe and wonderful in the leaves the fragrant apple is set.
Ah! and for me too, rain
And storm this autumn have seemed the rougher.

Speechless, incredulous I stand with all that her sweet tongue
granted:
She gazes into my eyes,
Her beautiful face put back she smiles, and O, the approaching bliss!
Of my happy eyes the feverish lids intoxicates with a kiss.
With the sweet of that surprise,
The touch of her lips, I swoon enchanted.



LOVE SONGS AND ELEGIES

XIII

Where breathes who bloomless left the meadows?
She!

Grave, in the wintriness of thee?
Her laughter might have thrilled the dead,
So real she seemed, so white and red:
Gone, and the aching world she widows
With me!

O, of her presence any rumour,
Spring,
News of her sweetness canst thou bring?
In that mysterious underground
What charm, what fire, what fragrance bound?
There, from whence bursts the whole bright summer
On wing!

Her glorious kinsfolk, that forsook us,
Wake:
Each lily, for the light's own sake.
But she, more strong, more swift to bloom,
Kept captive in the cold earth's gloom,
Will she not with the beaming crocus
Upbreak?

Too well thy heart, bereaved lover,
Knows,
'Tis dust that did her bloom compose:
And she, so vivid and so sweet,
Is now a name, an image fleet;
All that the stars remember of her,
A rose!



EARLY POEMS

XIV

WHISPERING SLEEP

Are not thy lips of honey, thy breath of honey-suckle,
Brother sweet of the breeze, wooing and whispering Sleep?
Soft at our ears like a lover's thy vague lips tenderly murmur
"Kiss me!" they seem to say, "give me, poor heart, but
a kiss."
Then our anguish dims, care fades with the fading lattice;
Into a lovely land wander we all unawares!
O, into what sweet land didst thou this hour bewitch me?
Wakeful, in tears, I lay, thinking of her who is dead,
Wishing, longing for her, my heart's beloved, who left me—
Left me, and never once turned to regard me again.
Never then shall I see a soft face over me leaning,
Feel a gentle hand touching me, never again!
Those adorable ways I now must only remember,
Only wish for in vain, sweetness irrevocable!
Sobbing to be with her, I heard a kind voice near me
Whispering softly, "Hush! weeper, this agony cease.
Grieve not now any more, nor with rending sobs afflict thee;
Wouldst thou be with her? O but accompany me!
Come, O come; for I know the grasses where she is sitting,
And I know the flowers, nodding in crowds at her feet.
Past the shadowy river, the river forgetfully gliding.....
Lay but thy drooping head, sorrower, lay upon me."



LOVE SONGS AND ELEGIES

XV

Thoughts of a mother, blissful solemn thoughts:
Hush, this is he, whose breath all being unbars;
My bosom supports him, he my bosom supports,
Last spectacle to surprise the ancient stars.

Hush, the wide heaven gazes: this is he,
All things forbode him, herald of all bliss,
Without whom beauteous eyes could never be,
Nor paradise await the lover's kiss.

Hush, do not wake him: with shut lids he lies,
Too tender with a moonbeam to commerce,
For whose profound and vindicating eyes
Immortal poets build immortal verse.

He, for whose sake the world existence keeps,
Lies breathing in the softest of all sleeps!



EARLY POEMS

XVI

THE EXILE

Sleep, sweet sleep, O not so soon forsake me,
Nor in desolation leave complete
The lost exile! Wherefore dost thou wake me,
Or what sound is that, so far and sweet?

Sundered here, than sad oblivion deeper,
What articulate thing remembers me?
Me, the abandoned, world-forgotten sleeper
In this rain-beat cavern by the sea.

Ceased it is, that rain! From out my prison
Gaze I, sad with unrefreshing sleep;
Through the parted hills as in a vision
Wild and gray appears the troubled deep.

Wherefore, heart forlorn, that mountains bury,
Lean'st thou to the world so wistful yet,
Though forgotten, for some fragmentary
Sweetness listening? Utterly forget!

What melodious life of blast and moor,
Or what forest fluctuating grand,
Calls me? Hush, thou melancholy wooer!
I have known, alas! a lovelier land.

Frustrate, wild for all thy gold endeavour,
Autumn, dost thou shake thy relics free?
There are leaves that fade and yet for ever
Cling unfalling. Hush, and let me be!

In the caverns of oblivion fortunate
Let me lie, an alien even to fate;
Sleep unwounded of them, those importunate
Murmurs—murmurs that commiserate.

Is it some caught rumour of the city,
London, through the night, immense, apart?
Peace! thou whisperer of perfidious pity:
There a million faces, not one heart.

LOVE SONGS AND ELEGIES

Me no more the beauteous world shall witness
Here beside the sea's remorseless beat,
Obdurate, hard to very human sweetness!
I with the disdainful silence treat.

Only when the storm-pent moon outstealing,
Gazes down compassionately bright,
Then I quiver for a moment, feeling
Something almost human in that light.

Once again, and tenderer, closer falling,
To my thought, what tones, familiar, dear?
O, what voices, by my own name calling
To me? On my arm I rise to hear.

Charmed I listen, and that sound comes sweeter
On my heart than angel melodies.
Sleep and exile fade, grow incompleter,
In that music. Home is in mine eyes.

Heavenlier now it falls o'er heath and hollow,
Slow retires, a mitigated roar;
All impassioned I uprise and follow,
Lost in dreams, towards the voiceful shore.

Lost in dreams I follow; and a vision
And a trance doth all my heart surprise:
O what happy sights are these arisen?
Well my soul remembers paradise!

Lovely as of old, loved mountains hover,
Valleys that with vast regret I see;
Edens sweet, my heart would fain recover:—
Yet far sweeter inexpressibly.

All the heaven of dim beloved faces
I have wept to see, swims undefined;
Hands that I have held, my hand embraces;
And I gaze with rushing tears half blind.

Is it you indeed, afflicted shadows,
Is it you from that tremendous sphere,
Come again to visit the sweet meadows,
Apparitions from a home severe?



EARLY POEMS

Ah, disdain me not, nor these bright regions,
Solemn musers in that dread abode!
One poor land you loved of all earth's legions:
See, it is our own familiar sod.

Clasp me to you, calm these burning wishes!
My delight reprove not yet awhile.
Each cold cheek I'll cover with sad kisses;
Cheeks too conscious of the grave to smile.

But what is it, ere my heart rejoices,
Comes upon me with that moan of hate?
Hark! a sound between the wind's vext voices;
The wild tide that turns in haughty state.

"Stay, unlocking arms, break not asunder."
Mad I cry, the mad blasts answer me.
Bursting harshly near, deep comes in thunder,
Surge on surge, the loud disdainful sea.

Whelmed in that great world of sound I hearken,
Wakeful, solitary, hushed in fear.
All too real, the endless waters darken;
Giant space, my sight can hardly bear.

Was't for this that thou, remorseless breaker,
In my cavern whispering murmuring bliss,
Drew'st in dreams my spirit, to forsake her
Here 'mid thunders and immensities?

Deafened, mocked with desolate sprays, all banished,
Laughing foe, yet will I baffle thee:
Here with faces of farewell they vanished.
Here beside the tinged, mysterious sea!

Whither fled ye, my swift thoughts outleaping,
Spirits? But now a form companionless
Stood amidst you, passionately weeping,
Thronged with soft and mournful presences.

O 'mid sprays abandoned they perceive me.
For a moment pause they, each turned Shade,
Ere they plunge into the tempest, leave me,
Me on alien shores for ever sad.

LOVE SONGS AND ELEGIES

Turn back at my cry, sweet phantoms! linger
 For me: see, I reach across this verge:
 Lean out of the winds one pitying finger;
 Snatch me from the insane unpitying surge.

From deaf waters that with ireful gestures
 Bar me, and vociferating sweep,
 To your sorrowful beloved vestures
 Over the spurned breakers will I leap.

In your bosom like a stormblast bear me
 On to that sweet land my spirit craves.
 From shores insupportable, O tear me!
 With a cry I rush into the waves.

But the haughty breakers, mountain after
 Mountain, listen, come convulsed with foam.
 Back they fling me with derisive laughter,
 Shouting, "Exile, back unto thy home!"

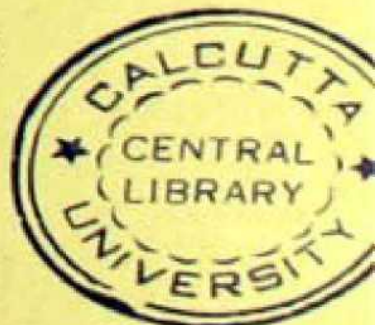
Gasping, buffeted with foam stupendous,
 Eyes and mouth full of the alien wave,
 From those cruel, glittering seas tremendous,
 Desperate, as a man out of his grave,

Back I struggle; and beat senseless, reeling,
 To some last impossible deity
 Hands in agony I stretch appealing
 Upwards. Infinite sky, and infinite sea!

In despair I look up wide and wistful
 Through the tears that blind me, through the spray.
 Even to that dim limit, heaving tristful;
 Lo, a single sail-speck far away!

Whence art thou, angelic apparition;
 Whither, like a hope across me thrown,
 Hastening? What the land, and what the mission?
 Surely that I weep for, that alone!

Heaven be in thy sails, O unknown vessel,
 Till those heavenly shores grow into view.
 See! my spirit, with no storm to wrestle,
 Follows, goes on wind wings thither too.



EARLY POEMS

For long miles into the heart of morning,
Miles and miles, far over lands and seas,
Past enchanted regions of forewarning,
Dawns at last the land that dims all these.

Go, like lightning: be the imaginary
Wings to bliss that exiles weary for.
Here, O hard compulsion, must I tarry.
Hie thee, hie thee, sweet ambassador!

Hasten, though the immeasurable distance
Break my heart, imploring, forced to stay;
Not a surge, and not a blast's resistance!
Quiet be the waters of thy way.

Mine alone be all this deaf commotion.
Let the breakers lash me with their scorn
O'er the unfooted, vast, relentless ocean
I would still remember, though I mourn.



LOVE SONGS AND ELEGIES

XVII

TO STEPHEN AND MAY

Something remembering, I sigh
Beneath this glorious Indian sky.
He grieves me, tender, large and bright,
Hesperus in the western night;
And with sweet half forgotten things
Zephyrus loads his western wings.
What airs of springtime's very home,
What laughing freshness as of foam
Make languid all the Eastern day?
I start; I think of Stephen and May!

Stephen and May! two names that run
To daffodils and April sun;
Musical sounds that fancy weaves
With the magic of the winds and leaves;
Sounds like the wash of western seas,
Full of the foam, full of the breeze!
I cry out suddenly, and through
This odorous darkness look for you,
Enchanting friends, that fill my soul. . . .
A million waters 'twixt us roll!
O, sunset on my heart shall weigh
Till I revisit Stephen and May.



THE GARLAND



THE GARLAND

XVIII

TO HIS MOTHER

Augustest! dearest! whom no thought can trace,
Name, murmuring out of birth's infinity,
Mother! like heaven's great face is thy sweet face,
Stupendous with the mystery of me.
Eyes, elder than the light; cheek, that no flower
Remembers; brow, at which my infant care
Gazed weeping up and saw the skies enshower
With tender rain of vast mysterious hair!
Thou, at whose breast the sunbeams sucked, whose arms
Cradled the lisping ocean, art thou she,
Goddess! at whose dim heart the world's deep charms
Tears, terrors, sobbing things, were yet to be?
She, from whose tearing pangs in glory first
I and the infinite wide heavens burst?



EARLY POEMS

XIX

Nor spring, nor bloom, nor freshness!—O come thou!
Bloom, verdure, spring-time, all things call thee now.
Not of the moon so wistful is the sea
As sea and moon and earth and air of thee!

The hollow, silent world, now thou art gone,
Like music of thy laughter, vibrates on,
As silence after music, O so sweet
Thy name is now for absence to repeat.

Ah! dearer than the dart of all delight,
Ah! swifter than fresh beauty to the sight,
Comes thy lost cheek to kiss of summer days,
And to the gazing stars thy starry gaze.

Come thou! The very air, that aches to be
Void of thy bloom, is bending after thee.
It is of thee the violet breathes replete;
Remembering thee, the rose is straightway sweet.

And my dream-burdened spirit, full to death,—
Ah! just behind the rose I feel thy breath;
Thou seemest through the sweet saps just to start;
Through the green leaves thou comest in my heart.

O, she is gone? She never may return,—
Past greenest leaves in Summer's heart to burn,
Past dew or flower or dreams or surges' lull,
To lie in deepest Nature beautiful.



THE GARLAND

XX

THE LOVER AND THE PAINTER

O painter bold and true, lord of every flying hue,
Whose immortal hand all lovely things implore,
Now to thy glory set, what never artist yet
Dared before;
Paint a picture of the mistress I adore!

What voice of earth is this, that passionate with bliss
Calls me from the coldness of serenest art?
Youth, thy happy eyes I know, I recognize;
Say, what part
Can Apelles play to serve a lover's heart?

To give sighs memory, shadows reality,
All the hungry hours with gazing sweet to slay.
Quick, O quick, deceive time and absence; give
To the day
Beauty, night but shows only to take away.

Impossible! No stretch of utmost skill can fetch
That fair invisible in colours to confine.
How shall pencil trace unhelped her holy grace,
How divine
Lids of what sweet curve, what lips incarnadine?

Nay! do but see; the room is startled with her bloom;
A thousand shadows fill the haunted atmosphere;
Birds in the tree-tops calm are shrilling of her charm:
Do but hear!
Love's own graphic voice shall paint her to thine ear.

Speak, then, and let thy fire my duller hand inspire;
What ambrosial hair, O lover, must I paint,
What divinest gold fetched from sacred brows of old
For thy saint,
Helen's or Berenice's? Come, I shall not faint.

EARLY POEMS

Not Helen's, nor that hung streaming the stars among;
 Only paint for me the tresses of a girl;
 Tresses dear and deep, tresses soft as sleep,—
 Not a curl
 But for its loveliness would impoverish the pearl.

What darling locks are these that dim the very breeze,
 Incomparable painter, with their shower?
 Yet, ah! yet once more this ringlet I implore;
 Every flower
 Just as she places it in some sweet careless hour!

From your rapturous tones where Love himself enthrones,
 Charming youth, I caught these touches of her grace.
 Turn now your sparkling eyes, O, now my soul advise:
 See, I trace—
 Venus help me now! her unknown heavenly face.

Outlines, lovely, vague, my haunted spirit plague.
 What suggestions dim and sweet they breed!
 Shadows gather thick, and my heart beats quick:
 O proceed!
 From the canvas now let dawn her face indeed:

See, unclouding clear, her very face appear;
 Bloom ineffable, no sun-warm peach can show.
 Are these the glorious eyes that did your heart surprise
 Long ago?
 This the ruby lip your sighs remember so?

Not this, not this! Her face, O painter, couldst thou trace;
 Painter, her beauty immortal, sweet, severe,
 Thy ravished soul in bliss beyond the morning's kiss
 'Twould ensphere!—
 O intoxicated lover, let me hear.

If cold and perfect art could love's burning heart
 Borrow, and not tremble to possess,
 Then my tongue might tell, then your soul might spell
 The excess
 Of her sweet and utter loveliness.



SONGS OF LOVE AND DEATH



SONGS OF LOVE AND DEATH

XXI

MYVANWY

Oft hast thou heard it, that old true saying,
'Tis like and unlike makes the happiest music.
Then, gravely smiling, scorn me not, Myvanwy,
 Fairest of maidens!

Thou who in sunlight-sittest, pensive leaning
At the open window, thy hand deep buried
In dark sweet clusters of thy hair, and gazest
 O'er the wide ocean.

Yes, o'er that ocean far, far in the distance,
Is my own country, and other soil bore me
Than thy dear birthplace, other sun than England's
 Nourished my spirit.

Yet for this slight not my heart as alien:
What can green England show to match those regions
Save thyself only, what hath she that merits
 Prouder remembrance?

Nothing! nor any shore that hears the Ocean,
Nothing can match their beauty! If Myvanwy
Had but an exile's sad heart in her bosom,
 She too would say so.

She too would say so, and back in thought returning,
How would her sweet eyes fill with tears of gladness,
How would she marvel, the lovely maiden,
 Breathless with gazing!

There, stretching lonely, do the giant mountains
Rise with their ages of snows to heaven,
Snows, the heart shudders, so far away seem they,
 Fearfully lovely;

There is the tall palm, like her own dear stature,
The land's green lady, and riotously hang there,
All for Myvanwy's lips, the strange, delicious
 Fruits of the tropics;



EARLY POEMS

And the vast elephant that dreams for ages,
Lost among dim leaves and things of old, remembers:
Would he not, rousing at her name's sweet rumour,
Pace to behold her?

O me, what glories would her eyes enkindle,
Eyes with their quick imaginative rapture!
How shall I picture to her all the strangeness,
All the enchantment,

In that enchanted land of moon? My heart faints
And my tongue falters: For long ago, Myvanwy,
Deep in the east where now but evening gathers,
Lost is my country.

Long ago hither in passionate boyhood,
Lightly an exile, lightly leagues I wandered
Over the bitter foam; so far Fate led me
Only to love thee.

Lost is that country, and all but forgotten
Mid these chill breezes, yet still, oh, believe me
All her meridian suns and ardent summers
Burn in my bosom.



SONGS OF LOVE AND DEATH

XXII

MYVANWY IN THE WOODS

Virgin darkness, wet and deep,
Where dwells but April, dwells but sleep,
What presence clear,
Like a beam has entered here?
What loved footsteps, that the trees
Freshen their soliloquies,
Birds break into louder lays,
All fair nature's heart runs wild
To remember her sweet child?
In the wood Myvanwy strays.

O what gladness thrills her through
Her wayward darling back to woo
From life again,
Thought and passion, stir and men!
Clasp her now from that great lure,
O sweet nature, clasp her sure!
Where no alien eye perceives,
Lead her; where dim brooks have birth,
Fill her with the smell of earth,
Shut her in a thousand leaves!

Bloom in foliage like the flowers,
Myvanwy; to that world of ours,
Of throng and street,
How strayed in your vernal feet?
There, where not a daisy smiles,
There, where green earth's pale exiles
Toil and toil and never cease!
Who is this? the passer said;
Rustic grass was in your tread,
In your laughter the wild breeze.

Ah! no gift of heath to city,
It was love led you, love and pity,
To my sad heart,
Child, your rapture to impart.

EARLY POEMS

Me, fast-bound like wintry earth,
Your intoxicating mirth
Loosed, and rained delightful showers,
Showed me where their song birds borrow,—
All the uselessness of sorrow
All the joy of April flowers.



SONGS OF LOVE AND DEATH

XXIII

LONDON

Farewell, sweetest country; out of my heart, you roses,
Wayside roses, nodding, the slow traveller to keep.
'Too long have I drowsed alone in the meadows deep,
'Too long alone endured the silence Nature espouses.
Oh, the rush, the rapture of life! throngs, lights, houses,
This is London. I wake as a sentinel from sleep.

Stunned with the fresh thunder, the harsh delightful noises,
I move entranced on the throughing pavement. How sweet,
To eyes sated with green, the dusty brick-walled street!
And the lone spirit, of self so weary, how it rejoices
To be lost in others, bathed in the tones of human voices,
And feel hurried along the happy tread of feet.

And a sense of vast sympathy my heart almost crazes,
The warmth of kindred hearts in thousands beating with
mine.

Each fresh face, each figure, my spirit drinks like wine,—
Thousands endlessly passing. Violets, daisies,
What is your charm to the passionate charm of faces,
This ravishing reality, this earthliness divine?

O murmur of men more sweet than all the wood's caresses,
How sweet only to be an unknown leaf that sings
In the forest of life! Cease, Nature, thy whisperings!
Can I talk with leaves, or fall in love with breezes?
Beautiful boughs, your shade not a human pang appeases,
This is London. I lie, and twine in the roots of things



EARLY POEMS

XXIV

THE OLD SWEET QUIET

Where art thou, my old sweet Quiet,
Where, O where?
By the billows canst thou be?
Is it there?
There, where hushed from wild waves' riot
Breaks the smoothed blue sea?
No, not there! The peaceful moon
By those falling waves would stir
With the far, far distance soon
Longings infinite for her;
Her, that from my heart can purge
Not a billow, not a surge.
No, not there!

Art thou in the cornfields lonely?
Oh, to be
Where the wide earth ripples green
Like a sea!
There, possessed of verdure only,
Watching dost thou lean?
No! not there; for thou wouldst meet
By some stile, some hedgerow fair,
Sweet objects, ah! too keenly sweet
With the memory of her;
Her, that from their perfume knows
Not a woodbine, not a rose!
No, not there!



SONGS OF LOVE AND DEATH

XXV

HOME-THOUGHTS

While I recall you o'er deep parting seas,
Lonelier have grown these cliffs, this English grass.
Haunt of my heart, dear faces, let me pass
To that far south, till presence bring me peace.
Unsatisfied with those dead memories,
I muse, and mould from each sweet day that was
An image of the future; but, alas!
What hunger can oblivious hope appease?

My soul may travel to you, but the sea
Sternly puts back the pilgrim feet of life
With the harsh warning of necessity;—
That oft-taught truth my sighs would fain unlearn
How idle is human passion! Yet its strife
Is duty, and our hearts are made to yearn.



EARLY POEMS

XXVI

SAPPHICS

Cease, O my spirit, cease this endless yearning!
Idly thou seekest; gone is it, past hoping,
That golden treasure: thine own sweet contentment
See shalt thou never.

Glass'd in her waters, her own green haunts with music
Shall the flown mavis fill again, and warbling
Taste her old freedom: but oh, not the prisoned
Breast that is burning,

Burning, Myvanwy, from that smile whose sweetness
Makes mad the spirit and tells the trembling gazer
Peace is gone from him, peace and every thankful
Moment forever.

Passion-poised dreamer, what life is now left thee?
Shall absence help thee to forget her? Ah! no
Far from those lovely smiles, that lovely presence,
Life becomes hateful;

Dull seems each minute, each creeping hour I number.
Oh, though so distant, like a fire she haunts me.
Absence may bring me fret, but never respite,
Never oblivion.

All the sweet radiant day in longing passes;
Darkness but ushers hours of broken slumber,
Till, my heart struggling with her name half murmured,
Sad I awaken.

Only when after pain there comes a langour,
And that strong image fades awhile grown dimmer,
Then do I something feel like peace, half hoping
Almost for freedom.

But when I see her, and in mere stranger's greeting
For one sweet moment feel her hand within mine,
Oh, then through every vein quick shoots the fever,
Shoots the old madness;



SONGS OF LOVE AND DEATH

Once again o'er me comes that spell so potent,
Charmed by the sweet tones, lost I sit in listening,
At each look trembling, her heavenly eyes give me,
Speechless with passion,

Drinking delicious fire, delicious anguish,
Grown half immortal.—But ah! to what purpose
Doth thy heart beat so, doth thy breath oppress thee?
Vainly thou lovest!

Beautiful, distant as a star she smiles down
In virgin silence on thy fevered passion.
Passion! She knows not what it means, in heavenly
Quiet reposing.



EARLY POEMS

XXVII

BABY

Baby dear! and shall we sever?
All your own
Mother is, and yours alone.
Father goes; he cares not, he;
Comes and now from other shores,
Baby dear, you deity
Woos he and adores.
Never heed him! he was never
Yours!

My one bliss, and would you lonely
Leave my heart,
Thus from mother's lap to part?
O what is it, charm of charms,
Seek your lips incarnadine,
Stretching forth your little arms
With that cry divine?
Enchantment! oh, art thou not only
Mine?

Fret not so, nor tear my raiment;
Heed not thou,
Softly though he flatters now.
Woods nor whispers thinks she sweet,
Mother, to thy vague murmurs:
Men, the world, the roaring street
Father, he prefers.
Hers you are, 'gainst every claimant
Hers!

Leave him! Not a kiss deserves he,
Lonely here
To forsake us, baby dear.
Toils and troubles, all the week,
They possess him, toils like tares.
For the rose of baby's cheek
Not a thought he cares.
'Tis for them his heart preserves he
Theirs!



SONGS OF LOVE AND DEATH

Laughing, see, has baby known him;
With small hands,
Stretching out, his beard demands.
Oh, his flattery well I know.
Sweet he comes as April showers.
Wait, poor prattler, he will go
False as April flowers.
No! my joy, we cannot own him
Ours!

From his arms to keep you? Never!
Baby dear,
From his arms, your native sphere,
Home from labour comes he tired.
You and I, his only bliss,
Crown him, crown our king desired.
To adore and kiss,
You and I, his slaves forever—
His!



EARLY POEMS

XXVIII

A LULLABY

Hush, my darling, sleep again!
Sleep, there's nothing here,
Nothing is my babe can fear;—
Moonbeams, the still sleep, and I.
All things hushing now refrain;
Not a cricket, not a mouse,
Not a sound in all the house.
What disturbs thee thus to cry?
It is but a dream's unrest,
Little blossom,
Hush thee, hush on mother's breast,
Mother's bosom.

Hark, the screech-owl hooting near,
Hark, his charm supply
To my sleepy lullaby.
All things woo to his soft nest,
Baby, all themselves endear,
Darkness waiting to beguile,
Moonbeams seeking for his smile.
Rest thee on thy cradle, rest,
Heaving softly, sweet and oft,
Senses locking
This way, that way, goes the soft
Cradle rocking.



EARLY POEMS
(Unpublished)



EARLY POEMS

XXIX

Say, O tranquil heart what hath disturbed thee?
Why so lost, so changed
That I scarcely know thee more, so strangely
From thyself estranged?

Is it a charm that so my soul possesses?
I am not my own;
Never can I be where'er I wander
Any more alone!

A sweet image haunts my hours of labour,
Haunts to my hours of rest;
Even in sleep I feel that lovely presence
Deep within my breast.

To a sovereignty I must not question
All my days submit,
Now in thankful toil no morning passes
Bunk in dreams I sit,

Listless, vacant. If the door but opens
With the wind, I start,
Looking for some visitant to enter:
Restless is my heart.

Dull seems every task. An unknown fever
Fills my veins, a fire!
Out of doors, I look not where, I wander
In a sick desire.

Bright it shines; The happy winds caress me
Blowing in my hair,
Nature smiles to welcome me, as ever,
She shall soothe my care.

Skies and brooks, and fragrant moods of summer
Shall my heart release,
And birds singing in the far still woodland
Charm me into peace.



EARLY POEMS

Yet I feel, within me burns a something
That will have no calm.
Oh, for me the fields have lost their fragrance
And the birds their charm!

To one lovely face have passed forever
Nature's own fair powers:
In her eyes the distant blue of heaven;
On her cheek the flowers!

Vision beautiful! Ah, hast thou taken
All I loved away?
Hearts contentment, hours of tranquil pleasure
Nature's solemn sway.

And instead of these what hast thou left me?
What felicity?
Only passions, only sighs and longings,
Longings vain for thee.

Give me back those joys! the old sweet quiet
Give me back again!
Lonely days and dreamless nights; the roses,
Wood and daisied lane.

Idly I entreat! With these no longer
Happy can I live.
Ah! much better, much more rare and precious
Thine own sweet self give!



EARLY POEMS

XXX

Between the blossomed hedgerows, happy and fair,
I met a little maid with all the dowers
Of Summer's hand in her small hands and showers
Of bluebells filled her innocent dark hair.
And deep delighted, void of any care,
Childish blue eyes laughed like those childish flowers.

'Tis with such love Mother, august and dear,
Great Mother, that thou bind'st thy children's hearts
In childhood's calm not knowing yet hate or fear
Ere yet the world's smiles wean them or its smarts.
Theirs only is the first and freshest boon,
Delight. Didst thou not so fulfil this truth
To sons of men, how soon then, O how soon
Age would usurp the fair smooth front of youth.



EARLY POEMS

XXXI

THE GARDEN PASSION

It is a garden, shy and sweet,
For youth and tongue-tied passion meet.
A green dim garden shaded deep,
Breathing of lilies, love and sleep.
Here only flowers in darkness grow;
Here only whispering waters flow,
And fishes glide and linnets sing,
And summer dances with the spring.
And here in evening's gradual gloom
Have Julian and Irene come.

Speechless they stand beneath the shade,
The burning youth, the lovely maid.
Bashfully droop'd the lashes sheathe
The splendour of her eyes beneath;
And o'er her cheek and brow of snow
The virgin roses come and go.
His heart too strong, his tongue too weak
Only his lustrous eyes can speak;
And they seem all one pent desire
One incommunicable fire!

Conscious of that impassioned gaze
She turns away her glowing face
As though too rich a joy and shame
In that deep crimson mantling came.
And with averted cheek, and hands
Folded, one rapt'rous moment stands,
Empress-like she smiles, and fain
Would linger o'er his gorgeous pain.
But ah! that passion-eaten look
Her gentle bosom cannot brook.
Tears start into her eyes: she turns
With shining eyes, and cheek that burns.
Love and reluctant maidenhood
Her heart impelled, her heart withstood,
A rosy strife; but soon that glow
Of shame she checks and, tranquil now,



EARLY POEMS

Raising her soft-fringed eyelids dim,
Bends full her starry gaze on him.

O what a heaven, what land unknown
To Julian's happy sight is shown!
To all his agonies, all his sighs
What opening, sudden paradise!
Abandoned to that glorious gaze,
A moment in sweet dread he stays:
That gaze of speechless amethyst,
Its meaning, could it e'er be missed?
He takes her hand inflamed with bliss
Her willing trembling hand in his;
And in glad tears she hides her face
Lock'd in his passionate embrace.
To his her darling cheek is prest
Against her own his fever'd breast.
Love gleams from her eyes into his
In answer to each glowing kiss
And while a smile, a sigh there springs
Kisses and tears,—sweet idle things,
Things dearer than the world is worth
In speech their brimming hearts break forth,
Words that with ravishing music pierce
Each other's hearts, each other's ears,
Her's are dim murmurs, his a voice
That makes the silent air rejoice.

Health glows upon their cheeks, its flood
Courses impetuous is their blood,
They feel like some absorbing truth
The fulness of their godlike youth,
Its strength, its beauty, its delight
O'erflows their bosoms, fills their sight
And all this garden, all this glade
Water and wind and flower and shade
The leaves that sigh, the bird that sings
Seem one ambrosial chain of things,
One happy whole, where they are parts,
It is the fragrance of their hearts
That the rose breathes: the water's sound
Answers a feeling near, profound.



EARLY POEMS

And fleshing, eddying fast and bright
It leaps with their own heart's delight.
Those spheres of solemn light on high
Shine but in glorious sympathy
And heaven seems for no other end
Spread there, but over them to bend.
Theirs is the pomp, theirs is the power
Of Nature in this sovereign hour,
For them the balmy woodlands show
Their virgin wealth: the hyacinths grow
For them, for them the nightingale
Tells all her rich melodious tale.
Earth seems one flowery empire green
And they its happy king and queen.



EARLY POEMS

XXXII

SHE PASSES

O happy hungry eyes, no more! Will you gaze forever?
She passes. Pang too sweet but to feel her past me go!
Heart that unsatisfied to be tranquil never?
She passes. Your pain she knows not. Ah! leave it so.

Enough, enough, if sometimes for a moment's apparition
On crowded pavement meeting I see in the press
Of a thousand others, O the bloom, O the grace!
Illumining light, and making the world a vision,
Myvanwy's face.

I shiver, what dream wraps me, what lovely illusion?
She passes: And O, for a moment a faint quick blush!
She is gone. The waste of faces, the thronging confusion;
But like flame to my heart I feel the pleasure rush.

Ah, hungry eyes, what would you? Faint heart-rifted
From love's own heaven and be shut in endless sighs
If once from virgin lashes, enchanting the skies
With unknown light I see for a moment uplifted
Myvanwy's eyes.



EARLY POEMS

XXXIII

O stars that shine so distant, was it now and here
Her distant eyes in pity, her lips to mine drew near.
Are these roses grown so sweet
Nodding where she stood but now?
Prick me, O thou thorns! my feet
Scarce the solid earth avow.

Was it here she kissed me, can it be believed?
Was it true I whisper, afraid to be deceived.
Did it touch me? Did her hand
Through me send a sudden heat?
Breathless at my bliss I stand;
'Tis so simple, 'tis so sweet.



EARLY POEMS

XXXIV

THE INVITATION

Home at sunset, worn and tired
The weary day's long task expired
'Tis but languidly I take, half slighting,
The just-come letter—when, O, what start
Of sudden pleasure floods my heart?
I drop it pained with the sweet excess!
The jaded sunset streams a-bloom,
Enchantment revels through the room,
With that flushed guess,
The afraid sweet glimpse of that hand-writing!

Abash'd with joy I reading stand
My worthless name by her white hand:
With a throbbing heart I break the cover.
The ecstasy, the dream! those words
Mingle with music of the birds
Rustle rife in the happy trees
For "Come" her own sweet accent falls
And, "Come" the enchanting throble calls
And "Come" the breeze,
"Tomorrow if you can, come over."

But tomorrow! O, how soon
Shall I see her! apace thou moon,
Move, move apace thy loitering station!
As if they never could be plain
I read those lines and read again;
And my happy sighs fain would find,
With sense of joy but incomplete,
Something secret, more than sweet
And more than kind,
In the brief mere words of invitation.

But twelve short hours and I shall see her,
O charm too sudden, bliss too near
For my spirit faints when I remember!
The far-feared window in the trees



EARLY POEMS

The door where tremble heart and knees
The breaking sweat, the burning blush,
And face to face well-nigh I swoon
As with sudden glory all her June
Comes aflush
On the dull weeks of my December.

With shame-defeated eyes I stand
And, thrill to take her lovely hand
Oppressed with the perfume of her presence
A conscious rapture twixt us flies
And trembles at our meeting eyes.
Though close to her, yet what seas apart!
As she converses, on my tongue
What inarticulate weight is hung
While leaps my heart
At a sudden beautiful erubescence.

Passionate soul with tongue so weak
Her crimson pauses bid thee speak
Wherefore one wild word cannot I murmur?
Ah, peace! nor let that hour too soon,
Too sweet, infringe this silver moon
With tumult of such fierce foretaste.
Night, thy grateful arms be deep
Till strengthened with postponing sleep
My fluttering breast
For that joy prepared be calmer, firmer.

Stay, swift night, thy pinions stay!
The sweet, the coming hour delay,
Suffer not thought with thought to struggle!
On shaded pillows dimly white
O hide me from my heart's delight.
Soft, soft my fevered pulses steep,
And whilst the long clear shining stars
Look tranquil through the casement bars
Let sleep creep
From the silent spray of the honey suckle.



EARLY POEMS

In vain! the sweet, the coming hour
Pervades me like an unseen flower
With sleepless passionate thought to ponder.
The tedious ticking clock I chide
And pace the room from side to side,
Images dear the dark surprise,
Almost her dropping tones I hear,
Almost I catch her colour clear,
Her shining eyes
And restless out in the street, I wander.

For though beneath the chestnut's gloom
Her breathing nearness, coming bloom
Stifle with beats the heart of passion,
When her starlike eyes I meet
Nor dare a second look so sweet,
Trembling to think how close she is,
When my body robed with shame
Feels her round me like a flame,
'Tis a bliss
Easier to bear than imagination.



EARLY POEMS

XXXV

THE LETTER

'Twas but this moment, and can the wings of bliss
The hovering happiness be so prompt to flee?
This is the same room as before, 'twas only this
Moment, and still we are sitting together at tea.

Never before had I seen her half so kind,
She talked to me; how soft her grey eyes shone!
The city but murmured; far seemed all mankind,
She and the summer day were mine alone.

And eagerly talking, suddenly from her chair
She leaned to me, with action more sweet than well.
I remember: A breeze from the garden moved in her hair
And I was happy, deeper, than words can tell.

Never before had the golden afternoon
'Gainst dark trees seemed so lovely in its delay
Or the light from open windows rich with June
Entering, fallen in half so sweet a way.

What did I care for the actual words she said,
That heavenly nearness of her, 'twas like a flame;
Love trembled with bliss, and hope unspeakably spread;
When hark! a knock without. 'Twas a letter.

She turned at the noise away from me, my queen.
The street door opened and grating it seemed to my ear
As if the loud world entered and thrust between
Me and the sweetness never before so near.

Then looking up with a smile of mirthfulness
I cannot describe, her eyes like the breaking day,
"This letter", exclaimed she, "Whom does it come from? Guess!
Some one I like. Now what would you give to say?"

Some-one I like! ah! those light syllables,
That tone so playful, shy, do they shake me so?
Out of the window, painful my throat swells,
I turn to look, that sentence dreading to know.



EARLY POEMS

I look and sadly I listen, the birds appear
To have lost heart and the garden seems less gay,
Clouds arise; cast a shadow of fear:
The charm has faded out of the summer day.

Yet O what depths of softest gravity shine
In those large eyes that gazing upon me fall,
Unconscious what wild beating of heart is mine.
Nay, foolish heart 'tis nothing, nothing at all.

Simple child she knows not the emphasis,
The fearful weight that dwells in her lightest word,
Her idlest nonsense, the shaft of a sudden bliss,
Her act most heedless, a wound surpassing the sword.

Some-one she likes and why should I care to know?
Is she not with me from all the world apart,
Alone, O blessed thought that comforts me so.
Yet for some light rejoinder I have not the heart.

I cannot answer, I feel my heart so swell,
But I think as I gaze at the sky's far blue,
As of a happiness almost undreamable,
O how wonderful to be liked by you.



EARLY POEMS

XXXVI

SIESTA

O, this heavy summer day,
Close in love's enshadowing wings,
Dearest could we shut away
All the load of outer things!

Throbs the garish noontide air,
Light now holds a fiery session!
O let droop that dusk of hair,
Hide me from the world's oppression.

Now when open the far lands;
Nothing but the white noon's power,
Sky, and distance! let my hands
Feel you near me like a flower.

Let me on your shoulder lie;
Let your soft eyes' restful hue
Bathe me: for the wide waste sky
Wearies me with all its blue.

Cool grey eyes whose lashes sweet
Dimly o'er my face may crowd
With their length of dusk complete
Coming o'er me like a cloud.

Eyes in whose fresh virgin shade,
I may, this meridian hour,
Under rustling foliage laid
Hear the sea-foam break and shower.

O this heavy summer day,
In your shadow cool as springs,
Dearest, could I shut away
All the load of outer things.



EARLY POEMS

XXXVII

True your look and sweet your touch
Yet my hungry soul is such
Speak! beloved; say how much,
How much do you love me?

More than ever tongue or tears
Faltered in enchanted ears,
More than yonder shining spheres
Are above me.

In the moonlight, more than this!
Not a look now, not a kiss;
Tell me, tell me, O my bliss
How much more you love me.

More than spring of sweetness knows,
More than winter feels of snows,
More than ever breath of rose,
Dear can prove me.

Like a sea that finds no shore,
In my happy ears once more
Breathe, and sweeter than before
Say, "Yet more I love you."

More, yet more than heart can boast,
Deeper than the sunset's most,
Than those eyes in deep heavens lost
Can remove you.

But no more my soul to task,
All its rapture to unmask,
Child, with heavenly gazing ask
Vainly how I love you.

Could delight exhaust its shores
Adding to addition stores,
More than all delicious mores
Do I love you.



EARLY POEMS

XXXVIII

MEMORY AT THE DOOR

Come, O come, for thou can'st bless
Memory, thou, my lonely door:
Now, past doubt, and past deceit,
Paint those haunting features sweet;
Paint them! let my heart possess
Her sweet face for evermore.

Where this sweetness is it set,
Lover, where the charm that glows?
Blind the hour, and deaf the week:
Through a forest dim I seek
All her baffling violet
Her incomparable rose.

Nay, one small delight will serve
Memory, but her eyes restore
Lovely lashes now upraise,
Paint, O paint her starry gaze,
Of her softness but one curve
Let me see for evermore.

Vague as violets are her eyes;
Of what colour no one knows!
What divineness rounds her cheek,
Moulds her chin, I do not speak;
In their curves an odour lies
That intoxicates the rose.

O, one attitude divine
Memory, one, I do implore!
Let her now, by thought oppress,
Vaguely on her elbow rest:
O, one leaning grace confine
To my heart for evermore.

EARLY POEMS

Curve by curve, till fancy faint
Lover think of that repose!
All her bending charm complete,
She is sacred, she is sweet:
But the embowered air can paint
All the perfume of that rose.

What dost thou with vain sweet stir,
Memory, lingering at the door?
But a dim and ancient dust,
At my heart a useless rust,
Hence! nor faintly savouring her
Linger thus for evermore.

On the past the doors of bliss
Lover, locked, perpetual close.
Yet to linger still is dear,
In the outer darkness here:
Sad "It was" of sweet "It is"
Still must dream remembered rose.

Dream not thou, for dreams are vain;
Lover see where swift time goes:
Through my dungeon-grating see,
Thou art happy, thou art free:
Haste, O haste, and breathe again
Her irrevocable rose!



EARLY POEMS

XXXIX

Passionately lonely
Star!
I would be what only
Thy soft tremblings are;
Fed with dusk and sadness
Hasting to unbar
One hushed holy gladness
O, afar, afar!

She, for whom worlds wrangle
Whom,
All this myriad spangle
Woos, surrounds in bloom,—
O could she from mingling
Thousands me disroom
And with bright eyes singling
Speak this doom, this doom!

Sole mid all those millions
Be!
Hushed in heavenly brilliance
With the thought of me.
To a point assembling
All thy soul's bright sea,
Desolately trembling
Poised in ecstasy!



EARLY POEMS

XL

LOVE BLIND

And has the sun forgot thee glorious boy,
Ah! whither yearn those wings upon the wind,
Those hands that vainly would the shafts employ?
Love, wherefore art thou blind?

Light all about thee, as to evangelise
The world with light, thyself a blaze of light,
Thou streamest on our darkness; but those eyes
Lost in perpetual night!

Not this way; Thou hast all mistook thy road
Relinquishing in Paradise apart
The blissful seats to make thy rash abode
The quivering human heart.

Upon our gross oblivion dost thou stream
'Twining with perishable earth to kiss
Into our hearts one memory one wild dream
Of the immortal bliss?

O beautiful and blundering angel pause!
See, but ah, mockery thou canst not see.



EARLY POEMS

XLI

Here freshly sings the noonday wood;
Let us sit, Vivian in the cool
Upon the grass in this sweet place
Of tree and cavern, rock and pool.

Echo is melancholy here
And languid here on the wet grass
The brooding self enchanted boy
Leans o'er his watery looking-glass.

Leans, and his own pale loveliness,
Is it a flower, is it a face?
Against the unimpassioned sky
Adoring woos in this sweet place.

Yet see the spring, the rapturous spring
Above them prodigally green
Riots with laugh of thoughtless leaves
As if such love had never been.

Narcissus passionately pale
For his own image, from the vice
Of centuries, his beautiful face
Will lift and turn to look at you.

So like a native of the grass
You sit and with the daisies blend,
So sweetly, O enchanting boy,
Are you a flower, are you a friend?



EARLY POEMS

XLII

Ceased the tone of waters
No longer tosses the foam,
From the wide blue wearying ocean
Released and nearing home.

'Twixt banks of exquisite verdure
That glide up like a dream,
Up the broad Hoogli river
Silently now we steam.

I lean from the bulwark gazing,
Gazing in groups they stand
The voyagers; we speak not :
Is it fairy land ?

The sight is filled with the vision
Of beauty never before
Seen, the virgin freshness
Of a tropical shore.

Beauty without measure
Passes me like a charm,
With a soft shock of pleasure
Lo, the incredible palm.

Strange as some fairy vision
Reed of, my childhood's love
And brown and slender mortals
Through leafy glimpses move.



EARLY POEMS

XLIII

Now at this moment grave
O, love to sever
Ere 'twixt our hearts the wave
Murmur for ever.

Now when hand locked in hand
Our last looks storing
With streaming eyes we stand
Silent, imploring.

In that far land of the sun,
In this of September,
Across the wide ocean
Still to remember.

What ring 'twixt us broken now
Shall bid estrangement
Of plight or love-token now,
What interchangement!

O' cut my heart in two
Take love the dearest
That, I leave to you
To your kiss be a rest.

Bleeding and wrenched and shock
From you to sever,
With your last lovely look
Throbbing for ever.



EARLY POEMS

XLIV

An eye that gathers bolder light,
A face that pure sweet blooded glows:
From May to mounting May in height
My darling, Arthur grows.
When will you grow
At last to know
And love us eyes of blue?
O thought enrapturing! to be loved
By you.

Now in the garden green of earth
Her beautiful own boy you run
With flowers that sister you in birth
And brothered by the sun,
Glowing to be
With breezes free
And with the leaves alone:
No dull enchaining human tie
You own.

On my enchanted breast no more
You pass the dreamy infant day
When turning from the world's strance shore
Nestling to me you lay:
Now each new sight
A fresh delight,
Away you bound for glee:
A mightier mother weans you now
From me.

EARLY POEMS

XLV

Saki ere our life's decline
Bring the ruby tinted wine,
Sorrow on my bosom preys,
Wine alone delights my days,
Bring it, let its sweets impart
Rapture to my fainting heart,
Saki, fill the beaker high!
Why should man unhappy sigh?
See, the bubbles how they swim
Round the goblet's shining rim.
Now they burst, the charm is gone.
Fretful life will soon be done.
Jamshyd's regal sway is o'er,
Kaikobad is now no more.
Fill the goblet! all must sever,
Drink the liquid gem forever,
Thou shalt still in browse divine
Quaff the soul-expanding wine.



EARLY POEMS

XLVI

Voice in the cavern dim and strange,
Echo sweetest,
Would'st thou all thy heart exchange?
What so dim and what so dear
Moves thee, that thou me to hear
Entreatest?

In those woods what flower of spring,
Echo tender,
Lingerest thou remembering?
Here, when hyacinths did flame
Like the fairest Vivian came
Young, slender.

With what joy too full to last,
Echo hollow,
Haunt'st thou that delightful past;
Here we drank when spring had birth
Nor summer then our vacant mirth
Could follow.

'Tis autumn; and the gold leaves fall,
Echo tristful!
Oh what joy wouldst thou recall?
Was the vanish'd rose thy vow,
Of what violet art thou now
So wistful,

In these woods where all is sere?
Say what plainest
Echo, to remember here?
Summer fled? the faded grass?
Laughter dead? Of all that was
The vainest?

No, not any vanished joy
Echo mournful;
'Tis Narcissus that sweet boy
Pines our hearts unto this hour
Leaning o'er his pool, that flower
So scornful.



EARLY POEMS

XLVII

THE INDIAN SERENADE

O harp of many-stringed power
That lovs't to sing thy Shuchi's praise
Again beneath her terraced bower,
By fragrant roses climbed, upraise
Some love-strain tremulously sweet
For her most meet.

And now great Ganges' holy streams
Sound haply in her tressed ears
As with faint murmuring lips, in dreams
He glides to kiss the marble stairs
By palace towers, in breezy shade
Of tall trees laid.

Lo! Kama's bright dawn-feathered steed
Passed in the moonèd midnight sweet,
Didst thou not see the gleaming head,
Didst thou not hear the measured feet,
O love, and did not thy heart sigh
When he passed by?

Touched by hot summer's heart of flame
My harp, it was but yesternight
From dreams beneath the moon she came,
Beneath the moon with footsteps light,
The fragrant air breathed of her breath
Hushed, cool, beneath.

My Shuchi on the terrace side
Thou leant'st thy arms and bosom bare
Save where fair jewels flashed with pride
And roses crowned thy dark sweet hair
And silvered by the silvered skies
Thy dreamy eyes.



EARLY POEMS

But O too soon fled waving hair
And glittering pearls and raiment sweet
And down the marble-paven stair
Stole her soft silver claspèd feet.
Again tonight I seek thee fair;
Thou art not there.

"Thou art not there! the night wind's breath
Sighs odorous through the Champak trees
The music of the tide beneath
Murmurs of love and quiet peace
And this my harp's goodnight to thee
O love beneath the Champak tree.



EARLY POEMS

XLVIII

INDA'S IDOL

I

Huge clouds on the horizon, wonderful!
The parched earth sighed for sweetness: how they rose!
Birds fascinated by the coming cool
Are silent: leaf to leaf a fresh joy goes;
All things are hushed upon the Indian plain
Whispering to themselves, "The rain! the rain!"

II

Voluminously vast! the husbandman
Stopped bodingly; and know as in a dream
The dread tornado blotting the lost sun.
Startled, he homeward turns his tinkling team
While surge up still those billowing hosts afar,
Wild legionaries, mustering as for war!

III

O little what was brooded Inda cared;
Her breast one ever surging battle fought
Through fields of doubt, with banners all despaired
She nursed the victory of one sweet thought
When her heart's captain, leader of its strife,
Her idol beautiful, should come to life.

IV

"Even now perhaps he awakens!" whispering
That sweet "Perhaps" she looks up, stands, amazed,
An awful stillness, as if some great thing
Impended! whitening glooms upon her gazed
Stupendous clouds that seemed to harbinger
Yet more than storm, yet more than whirlwind stir.



EARLY POEMS

V

Her heart beat quickly! "Is it to be now?
I waited on the fragrances of spring,
And summer's waving, soft, resplendent bough
Seemed of his instant coming the fresh wing.
Tempestuous clouds that bring the world increase
Bring to my never moving god release.

VI

O in celestial beauty proud he stands
Arrested in a dream forever still,
Paused on his pedestal with stirless hands
In a hush of splendid thought unspeakable,
Plunged in the mighty universe's life
Forgetful of his little human wife."

VII

I thought: "He but postpones me for a while,
A girl forgotten amid vast affairs,
The rushing worlds with his immortal smile
He guides: or soothes perhaps pale autumn's cares
Or lingers over one sweet rose begun
Or helps the fiery nostrils of the sun.

VIII

I will be patient, I will sit and wait
Here at his feet and make as paradise
The dull recurring days so desolate
With gazing on his everlasting eyes,
Watching his deep hushed face, his mouth, his hair
And all that silent attitude so fair.

IX

Ah me! so lovely fair, so breathing real,
Of such impassioned earnestness, he seems
Ready to step in ardour hymeneal
From the deep calm of his eternal dreams,
Yet for the mighty universe's sake
Hesitates ever more that step to take.



EARLY POEMS

X

Perhaps as he some lurid comet's blaze
Holds unaffrighted, for a moment he
Remembers,—fancies a pale wistful face
Thinking of him, in a blind simplicity
Trustfully waiting, his neglected bride
Till he that blazing comet safe shall guide.

XI

He is not all indifference. O, at least
In whatsoever gulf he labours, deep
Behind the moonlight or in mystery ceased
Of dews or lulling waves or noon's wide sleep
Scattering to reassurance all my fear,
Himself, his glorious dazzling self, is here.

XII

What hardship will it be to sit awhile
In his calm temple crowned with simple flowers,
His cold pure priestess still, I will beguile
With hope the long interminable hours
And in a thousand little delicate
Sweet duties, trivial cares, my heart forget.

XIII

Awake with earliest dawn it shall be mine
To gather swooning lilies; of dim blood
Lotus and jessamine pale; to sit and twine
For hours the sacred garland bud by bud.
And the soft south filling the odorous wreath
Shall creep upon me like his mystic breath.

XIV

And then with awful gladness shall I go
In chaste austerity of priestly robes
Veiling my joy with cold brow meek as snow
Yet heart that rashly, passionately throbs,
And stand to offer at his dreadful feet
In ceremony due my garland sweet.



EARLY POEMS

XV

O then with shuddering fingers from the band
One bloom the palest, loveliest I shall take
And softly in his everlasting hand
Place it for sweet pausing memory's sake,
And at the touch his soul my soul shall kiss
Far from the infinite distance where he is.

XVI

This woman's body beautiful that grows
Fresh out of blooming grasses in young birth
And built out of the sunbeams like a rose
Smelling of all the rainy breast of earth,
This mortal cup made for a god, the ache
And silence of eternity to slake.

XVII

Morn, noon and even it shall be my care
To wash and from all stains keep sweet and free,
Full of pure health and freshness: to prepare
For great and dreadful immortality
This flesh too weak for glory so august
This downward stealing kindred of the dust.

XVIII

And this too coward human soul that blinks
At brightness, flashing thoughts, and those great beams
Of sheer imagination and backward shrinks
To drowse in listless dark corporeal dreams,
It shall be mine to rouse from Lethe dim
In thunder to the flashing thoughts of him.

XIX

So did I speak, so act, until at last
From each sweet act, each restful holy rite,
Passion grown surgeless, longing folded fast
I have attained now a calm beyond delight
And made me a religion beautiful
That doth my soul in sacred quiet lull.



EARLY POEMS

XX

Brief lull! for now the tempest gloomèd air
Disturbs me. O rose, wind beaten, that dost cling
For prop unto thy pillar, while thy bare
Sweet breast in pensive odours thou dost wing
Unto thy drenching lover, the wished for rain,
Through dust, through drought, returning once again.

XXI

I, too, would clutch at some 'unmoved support
As with a quaking heart I slowly go
With shaken trembling footsteps, the wild sport
Of hopes that to my tossing spirit blow,
To see if now my idol shall uncloud
And drench my sight from forth his stony shroud."

XXII

So from her own words plucking hope she went
Through the long, lofty, shattered colonade,
Now gazing towards the gloom-hung imminent
With shy wild eyes of their own hope afraid,
Now o'er some prostrate pillar making way
That, fallen its giant length before her lay.

XXIII

And oft as on her lonely god she thought,
Perhaps in the late ripeness of this hour
Come down, and waiting for her, she stopt short
Her bosom thickly beating, robbed of power
To take one step, unnerved with shy desire
Waning on her own plenitude of fire.

XXIV

So lost in sprays of passion did she glide
A lingering, breaking wave; but ever more
With the strong certainty of ocean's tide
Set onward towards her soul's unfailing shore
That temple's inmost chamber where enshrined
In the cool marble dimness she could find



EARLY POEMS

XXV

Her glorious one; where rooted beyond care
Yet like a wondering rose-bud just uncurled
He hung upon the harsh terrestrial air
Leaning away from that immortal world
Toward her, fain to step down but for love
And memory of the shining things above.

XXVI

She gains the ushering staircase, and like flame
Battling for brightness mounts it not dismayed
Though vainly thus a thousand times she came
Heading once again the heavy escalade
Of hopes forever thrown nor knows retire,
Sweet, undefeated captain of desire.

XXVII

And once more at the fateful door she stands
Arrested with the storm of hope too sweet
At eager ears listening with lifted hands
While she in fancy hears celestial feet
In the grey gloom beyond her softly pace
And all her heart comes mounting to her face

XXVIII

In one hot blush, as thought adorable
Startles imagination, and her mind
That glorious dreamer to dispedestal
Crimsons the air with beauty to the blind;
And paints her still god of the glimmering frown
By some incredible sweet chance come down.

XXIX

No longer now a splendid attitude
Musing in changeless marble, unaware
Of her and all the human pain he stood
The framework of the mighty whole his care,
From heaven-wrapt meditation he defers
Unto earth's burning want of him, and stirs.

EARLY POEMS

XXX

There in the dimness waiting for her now,
There in the near hush'd dimness: but this wall
Severs her from his new flushed radiant brow,
This door, that opens, at a push would fall,
Her, from his heavenly mouth now smiling hides
Her, from her soul's incarnate soul divides.

XXXI

She enters, one small hand lifting to shade
From the too sudden glory, her fair eyes,
And though sweet hope's rich fullness makes afraid
Her beating heart and pained ecstasy's,
Nor stops nor falters, though her breath comes thick,
And with unhesitating steps glides quick

XXXII

Towards the blissful dream'd of miracle,
Her glorious god awakened from stony death
Gloating 'gainst tongueless silence to rebel,
Glowing to tremble into warm-taken breath,
From aching immortality grown young
And that fair stillness into motion flung.

XXXIII

Flush'd newly wondering at earth and sky
And the warm blood that flutters to the bone,
And quickening her glad footsteps, lifted high
In that bright dream her picturing eyelids own,
She hastes till rounding the last pillar tall
Her shading hand she lowers and sees all.

XXXIV

Then to the charmed shape goes with eyes that beam
Passionate entreaty, and to him makes moan,
"Am I mistaken, art thou a distempered dream
And nothing but an image of dumb stone.
Or shall my heart's rain pouring bright
Quench at last my longing with thy sight?"



EARLY POEMS

XXXV

He has not moved! O me, and must I wait
Forever? My expecting arms outspread!
And he my god forever obdurate
Down to me bend and pause over my head.
So beautiful! I turn away my face
The roses cannot comprehend his grace.

XXXVI

A thousand times have I heart broken gone
And hoping come once more, and yet once more
Inexorably lovely to my moan
You stood still: pity I again implore
My silent stony idol, come to life,
Come down, and look upon your waiting wife.

XXXVII

Now when the world is one wide prayer for me
In sharp suspense upon the blinding levin
Earth dreaming of sweet rain and every tree
Lifts its tortured suppliant arms to heaven,
When forest questions cloud, and of the shower
Now mourns to be remembered every flower,

XXXVIII

You will remember! O, and as that peal
To your stone heart, the shivering thunder breaks,
From the rent marble, beautiful and real
Come, as the whole sweet earth upon you wakes
Men, trees, birds, flowers, your wonderful new home.
And down into my loving arms will come.

XXXIX

Come down, celestial image. Is it then heaven,
Paradised in such beauty, to be stone?
And though stars tremble in the lovely even
Remaining in cold certitude alone,
Say, mid the music of the spheres above
Did you not ever hear the sweet word love?



EARLY POEMS

XL

O tired of deity, of cold deity
In that hushed attitude as of deep snow
Do you not ache in immortality
The throbbing of terrestrial things to know,
And, shut in irksome quietness, apart
Such burning love as troubles my poor heart?

XLI

Come down my idol: for my poor heart's bliss
That godlike deep indifference forsake,
Descend, and feel at once how sweet it is
To want, and to be human! Break, O break
Thy calm unhappy immortality,
A breathing fragrant woman waits for thee.

XLII

Made of sweet earth, with sun-warm senses sweet
Moulded of bloom and summer whose caress
Winding delicious shall around you meet
Filling you with her trembling earthliness,
Whose breath shall to your want celestial bring
The rich crushed perfume of a mortal thing.

XLIII

Come! vainly shall the vast abysses flee
After you, beckoning with loud alarms
A god, abandoning infinity
Take refuge in the prison of dear arms,
With one warm kiss forget the aching spheres,
The lonely waste of heaven's uncounted years."



PRINCE POMEGRANATE
(A Poem in Prose and a Romance in Rhythm)

PRINCE POMEGRANATE

BOOK I

In a wonderful mountain-azured region of the land of palm and jasmine there ruled long ago a lotus-eyed Rajah ; whose miraculous fortune was the pride of his turbaned subjects, the envy of his neighbours, and the perpetual wonder of all the earth. To few of us does Lakshmi, celestial giver of gladness, grant an equally-woven life of thorns and roses ; to fewer still the happier preponderance. What was it then in Rajah Aurobindo that caught her eyes of solemn amethyst ? Was it justice, or beauty or valour ? Ah no ; the gods have no reason for their gifts ; they are too happy in their heavens to care on whom they smile. The golden wife of Vishnu had indeed smiled on this fortunate Prince from her water-lily throne in Paradise. Not an enterprise he began ever concluded amiss ; not a chest in his treasure-house but was always full of shining silver coins stamped with his own princely image ; and his palace of marble and mahogany stood like a thing of wonder in that city of gardens which he called his Capital, and amazed the eyes of the merchant and the stranger with the clear ivory beauty of its walls, flashing through orange-groves and avenues of crimson fruited mulberries.

Yet, despite of all, one cluster had the wine of life left out of reach of this darling of the Gods ; and with all the opulence of empire, the Rajah lacked a more human happiness. He had no children. Sore disappointment to the desire of manhood, which, in the verdant pomp of Summer, feels the sure anticipation of yellow decay, and looks around for some image of its beautiful youth ; youth too beautiful because irrevocable ! No captive ever longed more bitterly for the natural joy of freedom than Rajah Aurobindo waited for the day when an heir should be born to his riches and enrich him with more than gold or ivory ; the tender passion of a father's love ; the flowery amorous looks of infancy ; and the dream of

EARLY POEMS

along line of princely boys, the continuation of his splendid ancestry. The first touch of autumn already tinted the leaves of life : and still the Rajah remained childless. And, as it is with men who have drunk too deep of the strong wine of prosperity, this one cross in his wishes embittered the taste of all other joys and made all his possessions seem a mere mockery of the one thing he did not possess. The olive garland of peace on his brow was sharper to him than the serried spears of all his enemies : and the fever of battle and the flush of victory gave only a momentary pause to the fear that haunted his felicity. A childless old age ! The prospect seemed to fill the present with a deeper sense of loneliness of life, and lent to the far off future the snowy terrors of an Himalayan winter.

Two tall and imperious Queens, whose beauty was only equalled by their birth shared the jewelled state and the partial caresses of their lotus-eyed lord. Queen Jefirazni, the elder and the taller of the pair, had the dark olive beauty of the Malabar ; ocean-fringed Malabar beneath the purple dove-haunted mountains ; whence she had come in the proud loveliness of her sixteenth year and exchanged her glowing girlhood in the Zamorin's palace for the rose-redolent city of her husband and the sweetness of those first impassioned kisses. Ah, how long ago that seemed to her ! The fire had since died out of both their hearts, and there only remained the chill ashes of memory ; bitter addition to the poison of estrangement !

Terrible to us are all the Gods ! And even he, the smiling joiner of hearts, the sweet Archer with the flower-tipped arrow, Kamadeva, is no less dreadful than the other who gives us that strange solemn peace upon the crackling funeral pyre. For when our hearts are full of passion and we lie cheek to cheek, dreaming of nothing but our passion, with a cruel smile he stands watching us, ready to mount his green rosy-breasted bird with the hooked beak of ebony, to continue his eternal voyage. A chill comes over us and we cry for him to stay and implore to love a little longer ; but the beautiful God, inexorable to mortal entreaty, haughtily turns away his head and takes his emerald flight, to kindle in others the same celestial fire that is fading out of us. Happy, ah, happy are the hearts that *can* love forever ! But for that, love must indeed be a fatality, or something of that infinite yearning, that magical sympathy which the magnet feels for its invisible companion.

PRINCE POMEGRANATE

No such charmed girdle of desire was the union of this imperial pair ; and queen Jefirazni must soon feel the bitter loneliness of having loved, and the vacant misery of loving no more. Not so the Rajah. The customs of his country permitted him an opiate for all his memories ; and before many autumns had ripened among his orange groves, the golden tribute of each lovely season, he had led home to his balconied palace of marble another queen to forget, if that is ever possible, that he had loved before. Out of the violet-sprinkled valleys of Cashmere, she came, a white girl with antelope eyes, a creature who seemed made out for rich dreams and roses. She was indeed worthy a Prince's passion : and a scarlet-caparisoned troop of majestic elephants waited at the foot of those cedar-dark mountains to grace the approach of the gilded palanquin and convey the veiled wonder of Cashmere to the city of Lakshmi's royal favourite. Beneath the amethyst charm of Gulsharoube's eyes the Rajah felt again something of the wild fire of other days. Her cheeks were a crimson surprise ; and her gracile youth must have been taught her by the slim gambolling gazelles of her own flowery woodlands. Such a charm of youth was about her, such a tulip of desire, that the Prince lost for a season in the smiles of his lovely idol all the swarm of cares that lurk beneath the jewelled turban of a Rajah.

The sword had indeed budded myrtle since the day she appeared, that red and white miracle. Like those cane-bottomed fairy junks, freighted with the pomp of some almond-eyed empress, when she sails all day on the blue seas of China—the Prince now burned along a race-course of revelry. The grave sceptre of rule he hurled away as a bauble. And what was justice and what was government to the great fire of his adoration ? One honey-tipped glance from his blooming odalisque was worth whole cities and peoples. The lash of the oppressor and the groans of the oppressed, if they came at all to his ears, only heightened with a touch of dramatic contrast his rapture and wonder as he listened with parted lips to the tones of his beloved. And thus in wild idolatry he burnt away the seasons and never came one star-incoronate night, but it heralded some fiercer banquet, some more coloured festivity. From hall to hall of his fresco-storied palace glowed myriads of jewelled lamps, while to the ravishing sound of flutes and viols a hundred dancers moved their arms and floated voluptuously. Gulsharoube seated on a scarlet

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couch would gaze and gaze with sparkling eyes and with a blush of half-smiling shame thought now of her own simple Cashmere and its old world simplicity and the daisied monotony of her days, its dewy folk, rustic rose-hearts she had loved and the solemn snow-turbaned mountains. How dull in the distance it all seemed to her. Life was to be something new and wonderful now. She was intoxicated with the colour, the gorgeous warmth of this tropical temperament.



PRINCE POMEGRANATE

BOOK II

But soon though Rajah of a thousand diadems and blessed incomparably now by the love-shafted looks of a mortal goddess, too soon does King Aurobindo sigh in the citron-shades of his pleasant capital, his rose-garden below the mountains. What is it now that disturbs a monarch's serenity? Some rumour of war can it be, in the remotest of his provinces? Or frets he, perchance, at the tardy capture of some notable traitor; or grieves that no torment can be found cruel enough for his royal displeasure? What gulf of pearls undreamed of by the diver, has baffled his fishers deep in the coral-cathedraled ocean? What secret mine eludes him among the silver-rooted hills? In none of these things surely can be the cause of his discontent. Is he not as the apple of Lakshmi's eye, darling of the crimson-girdled goddess?

But who of us that has once sinned against another can long escape from ourselves? Even while life is holding out to us her brimming cup of pleasure, with imperious finger the past bids us remember! The past! It is a fearful and wonderful thing! Like an old anchor in the coral caverns of the sea, deep down somewhere, in the remotest caverns of ourselves, it lies rusting and rusting. We are haunted by the ghosts of our dead passions. So it was with the Rajah. And there were times when his beautiful lotus eyes grew solemn with the strangeness of memory. His new love, his milk-browed princess, playfully spread beneath his feet the silken carpet of her ebony tresses, and stopping suddenly in her laughter looked up at him with the wondering stars of her eyes: and he answered her with tender caresses. Ah! even so had other lips as crimson as these, kissed his feet with equal passion: and had he answered with the same caresses.

What were the thoughts of Queen Jefirazni as she sat alone propped among purple cushions, in the gorgeous seclusion of her chamber? A swarm of angry wasps were murmuring at her heart. She hated the beautiful stranger from beyond the distant blue moun-

EARLY POEMS

tains, who came looking like a rose-cheeked statue of ivory to be the rival of her beauty and sister of her pomp. She hated her with that peculiar hatred which only a woman feels for a woman. She thought of the happy royal pair sunk in each others arms and fed by the black-eyed Boy, whom men call Love, from the almond trees of paradise : and the knowledge added a keener pang to the cruel sense of her own loneliness. Stung by such thoughts as these she rose from the ground and paced to and fro along the porcelain floor of her chamber. One delicate hand was pressed to her finely arched brow, the veins of which felt like fire, the same fire which flashed ominously from those black jewels her eyes, as they wandered unrestfully from place to place. And now she stood by the mahogany framed window and leant there gazing out into the deep blue afternoon. Flocks of gay-coloured birds were flying past in the distance among which she marked the violet heron and the white-headed ibis, all winging their way southwards with a lovely clamour from their discordant throats.

"Happy birds", cried the queen, her eyes misted with tears, "and is it thither you are voyaging in your clamorous caravan to the south ? Ah ! there lies my country, my own Malabar, palm-green Malabar beside the loud sea-surges ! Take me with you, flame-feathered wanderers, take me in your clamorous caravan ! How I long to be there once more to taste the sweet ocean-breeze among the roses of my girlhood : never again to set eyes upon this hateful city ! And my father, the mild grey-headed Prince, the noble Zamorin—what joy to see him once more ! To throw my arms round his neck as in old days and tell him that I am unhappy. Oh ! that he could but know his daughter's misery. I am penned in this place in the still company of my maidens, I, a Prince's daughter, who come of the proud race of free women. For they know not a male tyrant, the glowing girls of Malabar, nor are they slaves in a barbarous harem. The sun looks upon them and they are not ashamed of men's admiring eyes. Seated beneath the green ceiling of palm groves with black haired boys of leopard-like beauty, they give up their hearts to the wild romance of the moment ; lifelong votarists of Kama, whose days are counted by the dial hand of passion, whose life is a poem read to the music of their own beating hearts. Such are the girls of my country and must I be different ? Must I only be beautiful in

PRINCE POMEGRANATE

vain ? Must I sit here far from the yellow light of afternoon when streams in through the western window and shows the progress of day's golden decline ?" In the shade of the mountains stands the olive-browed Queen, fixed in that dark ominous attitude. Still as a statue, it is as though she were but musing. How composed seems her girlish young face, save at times for the quivering of her nostrils and the tight pressure of those clear-cut rubies her lips. Ah, it is a false and unholy calm ! Though motionless as marble, it is all on fire that delicate lovely body, and there burns through it a great passion of rage, a lurid lust of cruelty.

But hark ! what sound is this jarring so strangely in this solemn theatre as it breaks upon the quiet afternoon ? Peels of silvery laughter, the light laughter of girls in the adjoining chamber came muffled through the richly embroidered velvet tapestries. The Queen hears it and she starts ; her brow darkens with anger and shame. Had these wild and secret outpourings of hers been overheard by the careless crew, those faces without hearts, the light damsels of her seraglio ? The fell irony of the situation struck her. She had been acting then the tragedy of her sufferings to a hidden and amused audience ! With sparkling eyes and haughty steps she advanced to ascertain the truth of her suspicions. At the same moment a ripple of wind passed along the stately hangings, while a slim hand drew back the pictured draperies. It was Turk-i-ruz, her own tulip-cheeked favourite, Turk-i-ruz, the sweet dancer of Bokhara, whose feet were like sunbeam and moonbeam to the eyes of her royal melancholy. What brought the girl hither at this dead sultry hour ? She entered and standing aside, held silently back the heavy curtains as though to usher a way for someone of purple magnificence. And who is this in the dim doorway, the radiant visitor herself, an apparition as if stolen from the gates of Paradise, a presence more perfumed with charm than summer's freshborn muskrose—with smiling coral lips, and shy violet eyes and cheeks of crimson wonder ? It is the Sultana Gulsharoube. A hot blush came to Jefirazni's face, and beaded drops of dew stood on her brow. She gazed as if fascinated on the lovely, hated intruder. She was filled with that tragic emotion, half terror, half wonder which makes marble of the soul, when something intensely significant has happened to us. By what strange fatality had her rose-red substitute,—this thorn in her pride, this eyesore of her beauty,

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—come at such a time into her chamber ? At the very moment when her heart was blackest with hatred towards her she had appeared, as though led by some diabolical agency. Could anything be more dramatic ?

With the shy grace of a gazelle, the white wonder came towards the Queen and lifted her flawless face. "Dewdrop of Paradise !" the Sultana said at length with a deep sigh of relief. "Forgive me, sorrow is selfish and makes the heart forgetful. I was locked in pensive memories. But fie on me ! I sit like summer asleep, and the red rose wonders at me ! Thou lookest wearily, Gulsharoube. Delight of my life, royal sister ! Pledge me in the hilarious ruby that laughs in the vine ; and let every blithe drop today solder two queenly hearts by a carcan indissoluble."

She clapped her sparkling gemmed hands with an imperious grace and at the sound of that eastern signal a pair of yellow Thibetan dwarfs appeared in the doorway, each lifting a huge unshapely shoulder beneath a dish of heavy gold and bringing like silent ministers of the sombre orchards, the Season's palatable perfections. A great chalice of ivory drooped from Jefirazni's wide-leaved hands and with a languid air she poured from it the gurgling laughter of pink wine. She was laughing with her cleft lips at some words of Gulsharoube's and strange brightenings were in her agate-dark eyes. The Sultana dreaded the cruel violence of her own dark passions and the anguish of her loneliness was still upon her. She drank thirstily. With its care-soothing effect she brightened. Pleasure was in her eyes and in her heart mirth.

Her tender tones, the magic pressure of her hands, the charm of her suavity cast a net of wonder over the heart of Gulsharoube.

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A strong shudder ran through her as she echoed the words of the pitiless Sultana, "He shall be called Prince Pomegranite".

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Now that the fumes of the drug were over, the whole scene rushed back on her. What had she uttered ? Prince Pomegranite—That awful name of the Lord of Love which men say only on one day of the year and which only the priests whisper beneath their breath,

PRINCE POMEGRANATE

forbidden to lips profane. Again she saw the beautiful god smile terribly at her, his gray eyes burning with steadfast anger.

The red rose turned white whispering Prince Pomegranite! and the violet wide-eyed with fear echoed Prince Pomegranite! And with a horrible fascination Gulsharoube repeated the forbidden word, Prince Pomegranite.

She shuddered to see the image of Kama in all his naked beauty.

(Unfinished)



LETTERS TO LAURENCE BINYON



LETTERS

C/o Miss Scott
Ambleside Rd.
Keswick.
Aug. 10th, Tuesday

My dear Binyon,

I received your letter last Thursday morning and I wrote one in answer which I kept back in order to tell you our new lodgings into which we move today—but in the confusion of the moving I have lost it—so I have to write another.

I was very much amused with your account of the Apposition—after what had happened on the preceding day you might expect me to be too much disgusted to go to the school, if I had the alternative of not going. However, I took back your Mathew Arnold to your house in the afternoon.

I am sorry you cannot come to the Lake District—but I quite understand your difficulties in the way of expense and luggage, for we have been feeling the same. And Derbyshire, I can tell you from my own experience, is one of the loveliest counties in England if you only go the right part. I stayed one whole Summer at Mallock Bank, and from there had a splendid walking tour—My brother, I, and another gentleman took the train to Monsel Dale and walked from there into Castleton Valley, slept at a very comfortable inn there, and next morning walked over Kinder Scout and into Hayfield and Chapel-on-the-Frith from where we took the train back. I advise you and your brother to take that walking tour. You can do it very well in two days, sleeping at Castleton the first night and there is a splendid mountain walk over Kinder Scout. I wonder if you have got into Derbyshire by this time. I hope not, for I must direct this letter



EARLY POEMS

to St. Leonard's on Sea. I will put as a precaution on the envelope—"Please forward if address is changed."

I have written about four sonnets since I showed you my last composition. I will give you the first two.¹

I think I won't give you the other till the next letter, because I want this to go tonight.

Would you mind, please, telling me the terms of contribution and address of Macmillan's Magazine, or Harper's or Cassel's might do still better—I want to have a shot and see whether I can get something. Keswick is such a small out of the way place, you can't get any information here. Tell me by your next letter.

I appreciated very much your remarks about "the garb of the Philistine" and the 'Noble 'Arry". Send me your poem when it is finished and don't forget.

You must excuse this letter being so hurriedly written ; I will write a longer one next time—I want this to reach you before you get to Derbyshire. My brothers are all right and enjoying themselves.

Yours sincerely

M. Ghose.

¹—Only one sonnet "Earth Music" is given but as it is repeated in the next letter it is omitted here.

C/o. Miss Scott.

Ambleside Rd.

Keswick.

Friday, Aug. 13th.

My dear Binyon,

I have just received your letter from this place near Sheffield with such a curious name—is it Curbar ? I thought you were going to Derbyshire, but you seem to think it pretty enough there,—I sent you a letter a few days ago, but as I addressed it to St. Leonard's perhaps you will not get it ; unless people there know where you are now.

LETTERS

You see we have changed our address, but it is only a few doors off our old place in Eskin Street : so you can send to whichever address you please. However we are only thinking of staying here till next Tuesday and then going off to the seaside to St. Bees, where we went last year ; for we have had great trouble in getting lodgings in Keswick.

I have not been up Skiddaw or Helvellyn yet ; for I have been not quite well lately. No doubt it was the anxiety and hard work of the exams. that took all the strength out of me—anyhow I feel not half myself just now.

Lake Derwentwater is a very beautiful lake, and it has a great charm for me. I wander about the shore and muse, or compose poetry if I feel inclined—it is most charming to sit there of an evening.

We have been having very rainy and unsettled weather of late—that is the worst of the Lake District—when the weather once becomes unsettled, there's no telling when it will be fine again. I have seen Borrowdale, the Honister Pass, Buttermere, Newland's Vale, and a little while ago I and my younger brother went together to Thirlmere, with Helvellyn looming up on one side all the way, but we did not see the lake which is a very pretty one—for, being a bleak and misty day it came on to rain when we were a mile from it and we had to turn back.

I have not yet begun to do that Indian Drama—I must have a greater command over style first before I attempt it—For that reason I have been writing sonnets which I think is a great help to forming a style and developing it. I have written four, which I send you with this letter and I intend to write several more. The titles are :

- (1) Earth's Music.
- (2) Childhood & Nature.
- (3) Hereafter.
- (4) Absence.

The subject of the first two is "Nature", of the last two "Love".

Do you think that "Night Song" of mine would ever be received in a Magazine ?

As I look over it again, I think it is full of faults—the style is poor and faulty, too ornate, etc. etc. and the music is the best thing in it. However, I may be wrong : anyhow I will try. Could you give me the address for the "English Illustrated" and the "Temple Bar

EARLY POEMS

Magazine". Do you think any of the following sonnets would be taken by Macmillan's Mag. I think the 3rd is not at all unlikely if I alter the beginning a little—Give me your opinion on this question : and please send me also the address of Macmillan's Mag. office.

I have brought very few books with me and I have not begun reading them yet. These are "Sonnets of Nineteenth Century"—"Marlowe"—and "Chaucer, Prologue and Knight's Tale".

The Archbishop is all right—he eats a lot and grows very fast. He sends his respects to you.

I think I must here close—for I don't want this letter to miss you as the last one did.

I remain
Yours sincerely
Manmohan Ghose.

P.S. Send me your composition, if you have written it by this time. On second thoughts I think it better not to give the last sonnet—because it is one of a series of three, the rest of which are not yet finished. Therefore I think it best that you should read them all together.

Here are my four sonnets—I think the last two are the best ; tell me your opinion of them.

"Earth's Music"

Have not all things their music ? Hill or vale
Hear morn's light feet and grey Eve's lessening
calls—
Sonorous torrents thro' their mountain-walls—
The rain's soft song—white beating of the hail—
The pipe of the wind's multitude that sighs—
The green leaves' whisperings—murmurous
calms of sea
And shore—and, dreadfulest of all sounds
that be,
The deep-toned thunder-music of the skies.

LETTERS

Ah yes, these have their music !—Thou, O heart,
Full-eyed with tears and drunken with much woe,
Mute and unanswering, why hast thou no part
In their health-uttered harmony's overflow ?
Thy lyre-strings broken : rudder lost : no
chart
The music of life, or joy or hope, to show !

"Hereafter"

Thou askest, sweet, hereafter what shall be ?
Whether the death of love by Death is plann'd
After this life of love twixt thee and me.—
Meeting thy face within the sinless land,
When I look into thy forgotten eyes,
Shall cold oblivion bury earth's past years ?
O say not so ; but thrust away thy fears ;
For memory thro' the mists of death shall rise.
Ah then ! Ah then ! Love that was dimm'd awhile
Shall burn again, and run shall be the sand
Of sin and woe and pride and grievous guile,
All past, save Love alone, when hand in hand,
Touch'd by the sun-gleam of that wonderous smile
Before the face of God we two shall stand !

¹—The second poem in the letter entitled "Childhood and Nature" has not been given as it is included in Early Poems.

Keswick
Miss Scott's
Ambleside Rd.
Monday, August 23.

My dear Binyon,

I received your last letter from Curbar with your criticism on my sonnets, and your three sonnets enclosed on last Tuesday. I suppose you will think me rather a bad correspondent not to have written

EARLY POEMS

sooner. But all last week was so much taken up with walks, that I really had no time to sit down and write even a few lines to you. On Friday we went all three of us with a gentleman to Thirlmere—up to the middle of it along the western side which is wooded with firs. Thirlmere is a lovely lake, and wonderfully placid and calm, lying between Helvellyn on the east and a high range of fells on the west, and its banks all round the brink are beautifully wooded, the trees going some distance up the hill sides. Helvellyn that day was shrouded in a white mist and could not very well be seen. We crossed the lake in the middle by the Bridges, and came back by the beautiful Vale of St. John and a path round Naddle Fell, getting home at 6 p.m. and eating a tremendous tea (the four of us getting through two considerable loaves).

On Saturday we went to Watendlath, which is certainly the loveliest place I have yet seen in the Lake District. It was a very fine day, and the whole party of us started at 9.40. We had two ladies, and of course not much walking could be done. They went with my eldest brother for an escort by coach through Borrowdale to Rosthwaite, and then walked over the fell towards Watendlath. My younger brother, myself, and the same gentleman walked along Lake Derwentwater and then up the Barrow woods, a steep hill-climb into Watendlath. The scenery in these woods is quite Alpine (with only the absence of snow) being a sheer rock at one place, densely wooded, from top to bottom rising one thousand feet from the Borrowdale Valley—while the hills above the woods are covered with the most lovely heather bloom. A stream goes along the little valley (when we get out of the woods) which is more than a thousand feet above Borrowdale, which afterwards makes the Lodore Falls. In a pool here I had a splendid dip, only the current was very strong, and the water in some parts quite deep enough to drown me. We all met at a hill above Watendlath, had tea at a farm-house, and returned very leisurely by the Barrow Woods, reaching home at 10 p.m.

Today has turned out very fine and we intend to have a walk somewhere, though I don't know where as yet.

I quite agree with your criticisms on my sonnets; indeed I did not know till lately (after reading *Sonnets of Nineteenth Century*, the Preface to it) that you could not have your rhymes in any order you please. I see now that the rules are much stricter, and will keep

LETTERS

to them. I have not written any sonnets since ; but I have written a few lines of a poem, and planned the whole out in my head—It is entitled—

“A Song : To the Autumn”,

attempted in quite a different style from what I have yet written, in a regular anapaestic measure. I have tried however to think out several subjects into sonnets some of which are these—

—“Night on Lake Derwentwater”—

—“Derwentwater before a Storm”—

(suggested by some aspects which I have seen of the lake)

—“Handmaids of Earth”—(The Seasons)

—“Lux in Tenebris”—

—“Seeking Contentment”—

—“Grief and Nature”—

I don't know how many of these will really be written, though I have them all in my head.

Thank you very much for the information you gave me about the different magazines. I will take your advice and send *The Night-Song* to the *English Illustrated*, cut down and polished up. I don't think I can send it now for the September No., it being so late now in the month. Besides if I wait till October I shall have time to make alterations in it, and make it more perfect.

I suppose you must be enjoying yourself in Derbyshire—I hope you will take your walks in the dale district which I know pretty well. How long are you going to stay in your present place. We are not going to stay at Keswick much longer, most likely till the end of this week. We shall be all broken up—My eldest brother will go to London to coach for an examination and we two to some place on the coast—most likely not to St. Bees.

The Archbishop gives his respects to you.

Believe me

Your sincere friend

M. Ghose.



EARLY POEMS

49 St. Stephen's Avenue
Uxbridge Rd.
London W.
April 15.

My dear Binyon,

How are you liking Torquay ? I hope you are not pursued there by this fiendish weather—there has been an east or north-east wind prevailing—and yesterday some snow fell. Today it is north-west, and I hope it is going to get better. I have heard that it is quite like summer in Devonshire at this time of the year.

It is rather wretched here in the holidays, more so than in school-time, for there is no one to speak to—so I take refuge in composing. I am writing "Scenes from an Indian Drama", the beginning of one, tho' I don't know whether it is going to come to anything. The subject I have chosen is a difficult one, for it tends to become too luxuriant and fantastic. So I have cast it into a Greek mould—intending to do a prologue and a *παροδος*—I have already written about twenty lines of the *parodos*—it is a description of a Himalayan cedar-forest at night. This sounds promising, but unfortunately I have done it in a very unconventional metre—Octosyllabic unrhymed, which was a mistake. It is also an attempt at the dramatic ending in violence. I went to your place on Saturday, and got back the "Light of Asia" and my poems. So you do not like Edwin Arnold's book ; I dare say it is poor ; but I have never read it. It was an English lady, a student at Newnham College, Cambridge, (a Buddhist, not a Christian) who sent it to us, and hoped that we were Buddhists also. I never knew till lately that my father was a Buddhist, nor indeed that he had any religion ; strange to say he is ; his great interest in science seems to have led him to it partly. He believes that all the forces of nature and human souls will merge into God, which seems to me a very strange theory. This is the doctrine of Nirvana.

How did you like my poems ? Please to criticize me, as you really think. For it is a good and wholesome thing to be criticized. I am afraid the long piece from Simonides was rather feeble. I did not mean you to see two worthless pieces which I had pencilled across, but your violent conduct on Thursday left me no choice.

LETTERS

Have you finished your Drama ? Or added any more to it—or have you written any more sonnets or other poems ? I thought your three sonnets very fine, especially admiring the simple and subtle beauty and delicacy of some of the antitheses in them, such as—

—Knowing heaven is not far when she is near.

—Ah, tho' I sigh I cannot choose but cheer.

—She whose bright years are as a morn of May.

—Lonely as I, but not as I forlorn.

and some others—They surpass Shakespeare (I am not flattering in the least). I said I liked two better than a third ; but I now think they are all very beautiful.

Have you got your poems into the Temple Bar Magazine ? Perhaps you have not heard yet. I forgot to say, when I went to your house your father asked me to stay—But, as I always feel very nervous among complete strangers, I declined. Do not forget please to get me a copy of your cousin's poems, when convenient. I have been reading Shelley's Essays. I think the Essay on Poetry and that on Christianity sublime. There is nothing to equal them as English prose even in De Quincey. I have also read Rustum and Sohrab, which certainly has great pathos and beauty.

I don't think there is anything more to tell you of—except that somehow I feel exceedingly melancholy these holidays.

Yours ever faithfully,
Manmohan Ghose.

49 St. Stephen's Avenue
Uxbridge Rd.
London.W.
Wed. April. 20th.
1887

My dear Binyon,

I was very glad to get your letter yesterday morning. It is refreshing to hear you talk of primroses and celandines : here the foliage is only just beginning to come out. The weather has changed too and it is tolerably warm. You don't know how much I was rejoiced to hear that you liked my poems. You are the only one who gives me

EARLY POEMS

any encouragement to write ; and I am sure it cannot be all in vain, for I know you could tolerate nothing but true poetry. My brothers are quite apathetic about them. I am only afraid you praise them too much. I like your criticisms—I will try to avoid repetitions of the same word (which is one of my besetting faults) and also the Matthew-Arnoldism you spoke of—please don't be sparing in telling me my faults—it will do me a great deal of good—I am afraid I cannot send you anything I have written—because it is all in an unfinished state—so far I have written about 50 lines of the Drama I told you of. I must write the prologue first, and then you will understand it better.

While I write, your cousin's "Orestes and Other Poems" has come—I am very much obliged to your aunt for sending it to me. I see it has a good many corrections in hand-writing. I remember you once read me a piece of blank verse written by your cousin, which I thought very fine—it was Lucifer tempting a man.

What, I wonder, is this latest-born child of your Muse. You have not even told me its name, but I suppose I shall see it in time. There is a whole lot of your poems I have not read, and must read when I can get hold of them. And your Dramatic Poem, when are you going to finish it ? I think I positively remember a few lines about the Orontes which you recited once—(for I don't think I could remember lines of poetry from a recitation often ;) which I thought particularly delightful—so I am anxious to hear the whole. I am confident it will be very grand. Your idea about the Greek and Latin lyric poets is a very good one, I think. It would be an original thing, and a delightful labour. I do not know what Latin lyric poets there are, except Catullus (whom I have not read) and perhaps Tibullus, unless you would admit a few odes of Horace. In Greek there are a great many names—of the purely lyric, Sappho, Alcaeus, Archilochus, Anacreon, and Simonides—(I don't know whether any fragments remain of Bacchylides who was also said to be very great poet)—and lastly Pindar : of the idyllic—Moschus, Bion, and Theocritus—and of the elegiac a great many—such as Mimnermus, Callimachus, etc. Of all these I only know a little of Moschus, Bion, Mimnermus, Anacreon and Simonides. The latter I like especially : there is a tender and mournful air about some of his fragments which is very captivating.

I have not yet read Balder Dead, tho' I mean to some time. Your praise of Matthew Arnold's blank verse is very just : I know

LETTERS

you admired very much especially the last passage in Sohrab and Rustom ("But the majestic river floated on"). I quite agree that it is an astonishing piece of writing. What do you mean by saying you have got me to contend against—you know that if I went in for the same scholarship as you I should have no chance whatever—But I heartily long for those days, when I shall leave this place and go to Oxford. May they soon come ! But I don't think I shall get a scholarship so soon as you will. I have read part of the "Oedipus at Colonus"—it is far superior to any Greek play I have yet read.

The vision of school is rising again in my mind, and wretched wearisome mornings and afternoons with Carter ; Homeric Grammar, Critical papers and the whole of that lingering torment we shall have to go through.

I must now say farewell.

Yours ever faithfully,
MANMOHAN GHOSE

I hope this will reach you before you go from Torquay.

2, Plynlmmon Terrace,
Hastings,
Sussex.
1887

My dear Binyon,

I was going to write to you at once, when your letter came (also Swinburne's Byron, for which many thanks). I have just had a letter from my father, and I wanted to tell you the joyful news that he has willingly consented to my staying in England, and working at literature since it is so in my line. He also says that he would like me to go to Oxford, but his means are not sufficient to keep me there long. But he may be able (he will write soon and tell me his decision) to keep me there a little while in order (as he phrases it) "to have still greater chances of acquiring literary tastes, make friends among those who are aspirants in the same field." So he is going to try his best to give me a year or two at Oxford. As to the British Museum appointment, he would not mind my taking it at all, tho' he does think there are objections to it—the slowness of promotion,

EARLY POEMS

and the smallness of the salary. "However," he says, "I am ready that you should take your chance and depend on your own enterprise in the literary world. There is not much danger in one of these appointments of your starving, if you do not marry. But you must not give up the scholarship in the prospect of getting an appointment.

You have to pass in Sanscrit and you must learn that. So I will try my best to give you a year or two at the University where you can learn Sanscrit, and improve your classics, get facility in writing and speaking and make interests and form friendships. When you have done that it will be easier for you not only to get an appointment in the Museum but to ensure a rapidity to your promotion to a high appointment. So you see I have no objection to this, provided *you can be sure of getting speedy promotion*. Perhaps if you can do that and have a home for your brother and sister in London they will have excellent facilities for education".

I have given this in my father's own words, as you will be able to understand the position better. Perhaps you did not know I have a little sister (she is about eleven years old now) and a brother eight years old in India at present. My father's character may well be called "thorough". He is determined to give them a good education, tho' he is toiling under difficulties. He must be a man of iron nerves. I could not tell you half the things he has suffered, but he is bent to go on. Indeed he says, "My body is as stern as my mind to have survived all the trouble which I have endured." I cannot but be proud with admiration at the sight of such dauntless self-sacrifice and heroic perseverance.

Tell me what you think of these prospects with regard to the satisfaction of my literary tastes. You see my aim is also to gratify my father in one project—try my best to make a home for my sister and brother as he suggests (after I have been to Oxford)—for I know their education is closest his heart, tho' he does not say much about it. At the same time I want to get myself off his hands, and lessen his burden. So I would rather not stay too long at Oxford for this reason, tho' it would be an advantage if I could get a degree. The British Museum place I think, all things considered, is rather unsatisfactory. Perhaps I could get some other Civil Service appointment with larger salary. But this will all come right in time.

These are Benson's plays for this week—Hamlet, Merchant of Venice, Merry Wives of Windsor, and Sheridan's Rivals and School

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for Scandal. I think we shall go and see Hamlet on Thursday especially as your cousin plays best in that. Our landlady says that Benson, when he comes to Hastings, always comes to Plynlmmon Terrace for his lodgings—No. 1 is full, so he may come to No. 2 ; but this is now hardly likely since he has not come already.

I forgot last time to say anything about your criticism of my sonnet "Dream and Day" for which I was thankful. It is curious that some lines in it which I expected you to like, and thought good myself, you condemn. However, you always succeed in making me see with your eyes in such things. Perhaps too, people who have read *Renouncement* are not much interested in such things. Only I am going to write a poem about this when I can work up indignation worthy of it. It is possible I may go to Oxford for a little while and just attempt it, but nothing is certain till I receive an answer from my father.

You were talking about lines that give infinite inspiration—I have always thought this one of Swinburne : "Atalanta, the pure among women, whose name is a blessing to speak," one of such. I am very fond of it, and with every repetition it seems to feed the soul : it never palls.

You ask me to send you anything I have written. I have written a pretty long lyric (very bad) called "Sea-sorrow" and another poem "The Necessity of Republicanism" which I want you to see not for much poetic merit (it is in a peculiar kind of *terza rima* and aims at close and sound reasoning more than anything else) but for its ideas—which I think are original—and also a terribly ethical sonnet which was specially written for the moral purpose of putting into a school magazine—I was asked to write something for the "Ulula", the Manchester Grammar School Magazine—But these and whatever else the good gods will have me write you shall see at home. Meanwhile I send you this sonnet. After having written it I found to my disappointment that it had the same motif as Mrs. Meynell's "Renouncement"—but it is I think sufficiently dissimilar not to destroy.

Dream and Day

"Can flowers we plucked cease ever to be flowers,
 Tho' I am far from thee ? —how wilt thou say ?
 Or sunshine of the unremaining hours,
 That fill'd our hearts once, also pass away".



EARLY POEMS

O never I know !—This knowledge is a star
 Above my head : but in the heat of strife,
 Belov'd, forgive me, if day's falsehood bar
 My truth's beams, hidden from me with noon of life.
 And I must needs forget, who have no wings
 The world to keep away, when all my gaze
 Aches with it, —and perforce, by other things
 Blinded of thee, my heart sleeps from thy face.
 Therefore Heaven gives me night to heal day's pains,
 And dreams then prove true what my life refrains.

It is the best sonnet, perhaps, I have written, more perfect than any other : and, if you notice, there is no epithet whatever in the whole of it. Tell me if you like it.

By no means forget to send me your ballad when it is written—I shall be very anxious to see it. I think I have no more to say now, except that we have had the first two days of rain for ages.—This morning there was a terrific thunderstorm, such as I have never heard the like of, since I came from India. The thunder seemed to crack, crash, burst, and momentarily split the sky, and shook the house like a leaf amid a storm of groaning rainy and hurrying wind.

Yours faithfully,
 Manmohan Ghosh

49, St. Stephen's Avenue
 Uxbridge Rd.,
 London. W.
 July—1.

My dear Binyon,

Thank you very much for your note and the addresses you recommend. Since you say Littlehampton is so expensive (with bad drains too) we have adopted your suggestion of St. Leonard's. I believe my brother has already written ; but we shall not be able to leave London till the end of next week at the earliest. You seem to have made quite a sensation at the Apposition—I was told by some one that he thought Brutus was very finely acted, and your

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poem too made a great impression on the people in the middle of the hall. I never knew 'Pan' could appreciate your poetry so well. In his character of me this time—he congratulates me for my scholarship and says I have made rapid progress—a strange inversion of my last character—which was "slow but steady progress." I never told you about the Farewell-supper at Cookson's. The fare was gorgeous and regal ; and Cook in proposing the toast of Cookson's House had the bad taste to say that a House was bound to the highest honour that could lay out such a feast. Cookson proposed the toast to the Queen, and said "The late Jubilee Manifestation showed without dispute how secure and lasting was the position of her majesty." How very backward he is in politics ! There were several drinking songs sung—some rather immoral I thought, and Cookson asked me very earnestly to give them an Indian song. I was on the point of reciting the opening lines of a Sanskrit Epic—but I thought better of it. The whole thing went off very well—and Cookson the last thing bade me farewell and wished me success at the University.

My position, by the way, is very hazy just now : I do not know whether after all I shall be able to retain my Scholarship, because my father is in some financial straits, and if he cannot help me £80 will not be enough to keep me at Oxford—the most expensive place on the face of the earth.

I am going to Oxford next week to find out if I cannot help myself in any way, or find help. I feel as if anything might happen just now. But whatever happens I shall try and persuade my father to let me stay in England for good— ; I am sure with the tastes I have I shall be of no use in India.

I hope you will enjoy yourself at Keswick ; you are sure to with such enchanting mountain walks all round. Do not fail to go to a place called Watendlath, not far from Keswick right up among the hills with a lovely little lake, and, if you can, go across Watendlath Fell down to Thirlmere and home by the Ambleside Rd. There is a description of that walk in a poem of Matthew Arnold's called "Resignation". You go up to the place by a small pass with a stream running down which ends I think in the Lodore falls—I hope there is the same glorious heather there as there was last year. You must also go over the Sticks Pass, a high gap of the Helvellyn, down to Ullswater, the loveliest of all the lakes, and return by a path over the shoulder of Helvellyn which faces Blencathra, only this is wild and dreary.

EARLY POEMS

You should do it all by daylight ; for we, who came back by the Sticks Pass and went to Ullswater by the shoulder of Helvellyn, started too late and were caught by the darkness in the Pass, and came down by striking matches to find the path and the sticks set up to guide the quarrymen in the snow—at the risk of breaking our necks every step. I think, after you have tried everything, you will find Borrowdale perhaps the loveliest place of all. Tell me of any walks you go ; for I know the places very well.

I have been very prolific lately, and written a good deal of poetry—but I am more dubious as to their good quality. I send you one about India—called “Towards the Morning” ; I do not know how you will like it, I dare say you will find plenty to condemn in it. A pretty long poem I wrote in June (about 400 lines) in the metre of Tennyson’s “Palace of Art”. I have entitled it “Saccula Sacculorum” : it is an attempt to refute the theory of eternal punishment. I am afraid you will think it too ambitious ; yet it is written in the gentlest spirit, and with the simplest and most perspicuous line of arguments. What disfigures the poem is that too much is said in the way of platitudes ; but in originality and idea it is perhaps the best thing I have yet written. Other poems are “The Progress of Life” the idea of which was suggested by Matthew Arnold’s “Progress of Poesy” (only I have reversed Matthew Arnold’s idea of progress) ; and I have written half of a poem called the “Forest of Pan” in trochaics, not altogether inspired by Burne Jones’ picture.

I hope you will send me anything you write. When are you going to publish your poems ? I should think you have written quite enough to do that now. Here is my effusion : it is not meant to be anything very definite.

Towards the Morning

Freshly in the eastern heaven beholden,
Whence the sacred waters smoothly burn,
O’er the pale long seas becoming golden,
Silent streams the happiness of morn.



LETTERS

On the earth, new-touch'd, lo, and not rackward,
Come those glorious rays from their cloud-home ;
But their laughter seems a face thrown backward—
Lost child thoughts far o'er the bitter foam !

Kneel, my soul, now thank Him for the semblance
Whose kind grace sends thee the memory
While he fills thy depths with his remembrance
As the morn with glory fills the sea.

Thou who givest all ties that are human
For some end divine to us unknown,
Plantest every love of man and woman,
Why we think not, but we feel alone !

Lo, half-lost a lonely sail-speck wavers,
While upon this northland beach I stand ;
Ah, it carries doubtless English favours,
Speeding on so swift to that sweet land.

Heaven be in thy sails, O unknown vessel,
Till those lovely shores grow into view ;
See, my spirit, with no storm to wrestle,
Follows, goes on wind-wings thither too !

For long miles into the heart of morning,
Miles and more miles over lands and seas,
Past enchanted spaces of forewarning,
Breaks at last the land that dims all these.

Doth it seem not, as that white ship reacheth
Much-desired each lone and lovely spot,
So God stands by, while the soul beseecheth
All its poor weak power can compass not ?

Go, my ship, for thou my prayers dost carry :
Holy is the prayer I send to-day ;
Till the last seas loom, make thou no tarry,
O'er the quiet water cut thy way.

EARLY POEMS

Thence, thro' morning sea-mists freshly fading
 By gold stress, thou shalt spy that land hove ;
 Stop, no farther ; there seek thy unlading,
 Mingling with the world of men I love.

I should thank you for the suggestions you made in pencil in my book, one of which I thought was very good. Do not trouble much about the Swinburne—There was really very little that was good in it ; yet I think it is not a bad plan to read Swinburne sometimes, for, tho' quite unmeaning, it is like the divinest music and gives you inspiration in composing. I have been reading Marlowe's Hero and Leander which is almost the most splendid poetry I ever read ; also I was re-reading some of Walt Whitman. I think the criticisms of Earnest Rhys are rather shallow. It is quite a mistake to think that Walt Whitman is a popular poet, for hardly any one reads him in America. And for his plea for poetry for the people, no mob has ever cared for poetry, except perhaps an Athenian, and no one could appreciate Walt Whitman without a small amount of culture. What he means by calling Whitman's verse harmony and the ordinary melody, I cannot make out. He exhorts the young generation to imitate it. I think we could safely defy any one without the same genius and personality as Walt Whitman has to write in "harmony" exclusively—with success.

I shall be in London most likely for three or four months longer, that is, if I can manage it. The Responsions are at the end of September but I have heard that Responsions are held almost every three months : if that be the case, I should like to wait longer and get up Mathematics, of which I know nothing.

I was very sorry I could not get that British Museum appointment ; but there are others of the same kind and the same salary in the Coin and Library departments which I might try for after being at Oxford. I was not eligible, because they wanted a man strong in Sanskrit.

The heat is divine in London, but we sadly want some rain to freshen things. I hope you are having glorious weather at Keswick but you will find it rather rainy I am afraid.

Yours faithfully,

Manmohan Ghose

LETTERS

49 St. Stephen's Avenue,
Uxbridge Rd.
London W.
July 28

My dear Binyon,

I was very pleased to get your letter. I am sorry to say the place you recommended at St. Leonard's was full ; we have written to the one at Hastings but have not yet received a reply. I shall not send this letter till we do so: —I was much amused with your account of the stupidity of the Standard, which indeed is a thing native to it. As for the piece in the Daily News about me, it was struck in simply because it is a Radical paper. We have no family relation to Lalmohan Ghose whatever, but his brother who bears the same name as myself is a great friend of my father's. All the Ghoses come originally from the Punjab in the Afghan border. The word means 'fame' and they were a tribe of proud warrior caste. But our family has suddenly come down : the family house or palace, a very noble building, I believe, not far from Calcutta, is quite in ruins. My father when a boy, was very poor, living almost entirely by the charity of friends ; and it is only thro' his almost superhuman perseverance that we have to some degree retrieved ourselves.—You may be sure I shall try all I can to get to Oxford. But I am in a rather strange position. My father wants me to go out to India, and slave as a barrister, and become a great man of the world like himself—a thing which is quite distasteful to my nature. He is just now in difficulties and if he finds he cannot help me at the University he may consent to my staying in England, and trying for some Civil Service appointment (like those in the British Museum), just to earn some money. If I can so compass my own wish of staying in England, I can put up with the disadvantage of not getting a degree at Oxford. But this is hardly likely—He is almost sure to want me to try the University (I shall get an answer from him towards the end of August). But in any case I shall have to battle for my liberty of choice. I dare say it is partly true—what you say about expenses at Oxford, but you must remember that residence at a College there means a certain fixed pay for furniture, battel, lodging, etc—which is very high ; and I cannot get out of it. Cookson has kindly asked a senior Scholar at Christ Church to look after me when I come there. Your idea of teaching is a good one, and

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I shall have to see whether I can't do something of the sort. Thank you very much for your criticisms on my poem, so valuable to me who am quite inexperienced in writing poetry and also have very little critical insight. I shall especially take to heart what you say about *pictorial* words, without the force of *association*. I quite see what you mean, what you so well illustrated from that beautiful piece of Wordsworth. I think it must have been Swinburne who has given me this rage for beautiful words, and it is one of my besetting sins to repeat them. I am afraid you will find all my descriptive pieces (and I have written a good many lately) spoiled by the same faults you condemn. But I suppose there is no other way to become perfect than thro' mistakes.

Please accept this sonnet I send, addressed to yourself. It is, I fear, rather awkward and unmusical—and a very poor tribute of my admiration. I also very reluctantly send you a few passages from my long poem. The whole thing is altogether too rash and ambitious : I shall be quite ashamed to show it you afterwards. But for all its failures, I believe it is going on the right track. It would indeed be a work of lasting honour to the man, who would undertake to show and warn people of the accumulated dross and superstition which hangs like a dead weight on the essentially true and noble frame of Christianity. If only a new Matthew Arnold as brave and calm and reasonable could be found to attempt such a thankless task ! Passion and vehemence would only defeat their object : it is sane argument that is wanted. I will take your advice and carefully study Byron's "Dream" ; I have never read the poem properly. You will see my poem opens with a sea-description ; I wonder what you will think of it ; I have tried my best to "show the aspect of the moment" and its lesson.

I am waiting in great expectation for your things, especially as you say they are the best you have written,—perhaps some of your drama, or a new lyric as lovely as "Psyche". Please do not forget to send it me next time whatever it is. My space is circumscribed, since I send so much with the letter, and I shall have to close.

Yours ever faithfully,
Manmohan Ghose.

P. S. I made a mistake when I said "In Saccula Sacculorum" was written in the 'Palace of Art' metre : I meant the "Dream of Fair

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Women" which I confused with it. I think from "A Prayer" onwards is perhaps the best thing I've yet done in poetry.

P. S. I met Dupernes today, who seemed highly elevated at his late success in the Indian Civil. He looked very blushing and sleek, and held up triumphantly a Sanscrit Grammar. "I must learn Sanscrit one of these days" as Browning says but I am afraid I cannot begin till I get to College. It is very difficult too I know from the very little I have learnt. I hope you will also some day learn that divine language. I was greatly interested in what you said about Shakespeare and Whitman. Do you then think Goethe to be one of the greatest *artists* who ever lived? I have never read Faust, but I should like to very much. I suppose it must be one of the most perfect works of art. Matthew Arnold seems to think he was a most perfect worker.

For nobly perfect in our day
Of haste, half-work, and disarray
Profound yet touching, sweet yet strong
Hath risen Goethe's, Wordsworth's song.

I have read some of Byron's "Dream". The purity and strength are quite marvellous, but I thought it was rather lacking in feeling, which however, I suppose, you cannot expect in combination with calm and sustained power.

You at once feel the *intellect* of the man, as when you read Browning or Landor. The blank verse, as you say, is weak here and there; but on the whole, it is far better, don't you think, than Byron's usual kind. As for Marlowe, but for your distaste to dramas, I think you ought to read Edward the Second—a play full of beautiful and passionate lines—yet quite tempered and unbombastic and displaying a dramatic insight and power, you would not expect in Marlowe, being as he is quite a child in this respect as compared with Shakespeare.

To Robert Laurence Binyon

O could I wish thee one thing, my heart saith,
Without which life were empty of avail,
And earth and heaven left an unspoken tale,
A wish that were above all and beneath!

EARLY POEMS

I who this lonely eve, with sweet-drawn breath,
Silent as all whereon the daybeams fail,
Think, 'mid dark singing of Love's nightangle,
Upon thy face, —and feel that there is Death !

Keep but your own truth, poet lips so pure
God moulded—let none ask unto what end,
Seeing there the spirit's sign grav'd visibly !
Then mayst thou heal men's hearts to hope, t'endure,
As thou hast heal'd mine !—This I wish to thee,
Who canst so draw the whole love of a friend.

In Saccula Sacculorum

A stretch of wide fresh waves and lonely skies !
O how cool-blowing in loud foams outbreaks
The strength of the grey seas where morning lies,
While the new day awakes !

Day wakes ; and softly all the sleeping gold
Streaks with pale hue the long low line of cloud,
As tremblingly her feet the dim seas hold
By winds uprisen ploughed.

What spirit is diviner than this thing
Man's love to Man ?—Yet Love, they said of old,
Went blindfold on the earth, tho' swift his wing
And sharp his arrows bold.

And wherefore ? Ah, methinks, I could reply ;
Because on earth he knew what follies are,
Dim mists where nothing's sure, the memory
And light of Truth how far.

A truer light within himself he had,
All seem'd so dark without, misleading woe ;
Therefore he hid his eyelids in deep shade ;
He would be wiser so.

Your eyes, alas, are not as love's eyes blind ;
But widely gazing upon evil things,
Blinded much worse ; for his pure inward mind
Guides safe his wanderings.

LETTERS

So your souls sicken with the sight, be then
Losing the brow of love, the eyes of truth,
Joyless and sere, look on the face of men
With no soft face of ruth.

(37 stanzas missed out)

The Proof of Man's Godhead

Let him forget then, so put ill away,
Remembering behind, hope on his brow :
Man's godhead thus am I bold-tongued to say ?
Behold the token now.

Where we are lain together, thou and I
Idly on this slight boulder-ledge, the sea
Lapping beneath, and from this spot may spy
All things around us free ;

The sky above us, and the caverns wide
Opening how pure and cool close to our hand,
And the cliffs' dripping shoulders storm-winds ride,
O'er them the dim blue land.

Ah, mid the restless rapture of the surge,
Falls this one grief, that woundeth as a spear,
Men still must ask with doubting nought may purge
"Shall we rejoice or fear ?"

(18 stanzas missed out)

An Allegory

O if ye are heaven-sent better it were
To smoothe all fear from the sad brow of man,
With angel hand to lift him, void of care,
Make gentle as joy can.

Then might he be with all he sees at one,
Seeing love's spirit in the skies and waves
Grown glorious in his soul, and no more shun
Earth's joy that frees and saves.

EARLY POEMS

Alas, ye will not ? Let us then here plead.

Hearken ! perchance might may be ours to turn
Your eyes yet to believing, should we lead
Your soul with ours to burn.

And in slow silence, with a hand to heal
The clamour of its passion, quietly,
Like gentleness on joy, the first rays steal
O'er the unquiet sea.

So breaks the dawn into this wild, sweet bay ;
The inland hills are fresh with last night's rain
Looming in misty purple far away
Where the storm's breast hath lain.

But here, lo, how the high cliffs rise and tower
Far o'er our heads, hang with threatening frown
Till their steep tops fade into heaven ; each hour
Darting with small cries down

Across their giant sides the sea-birds white
Fall shrilly—or up thro' the waste of air
Soar mounting still, even to that wondrous height
Whence wonder swoons in fear.

But they, God's joyful things, fearlessly there
Dwell and make love within their breezy home,
Nor ever for the storm's safe menace care,
Nor heed the far down foam.

Here the wet stony beach curves dark below,
A hollow strip to the sharp headland's bound,
Where that lone reef runs forth, whose sunken brow
The flying sprays sweep round.

And windy to our ears the speech is brought
Of the glad ruffled seas that boisterous heave
Outside the rock-line, whence the far sound caught
So sweet our souls receive.

What starlit troop is this that comes from far ?
What voices o'er the Syrian wastes ashine,
Led by the deep peace of that glory-star
That streams on them divine ?

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O wherefore do those grave brow'd Mages ride
Thither with thankful gifts and offerings meek,
Fill'd with sweet awe, by high hope purified,
What God to adore and seek ?

Was it not he the world, we say, shall know ?
(Tho' on our hearts he hath so little smiled
Seeing him so dimly, yet believe)—and lo,
He is a human Child !

Ah, and thus human, he made not our clay
Divine, but God-like moulded a god's frame ;
Could he in mere worms dwell or live as they ?
In man's his godhead came.

A Prayer.

O thou who camest to our hearts that day,
Breaking the veil of sense, as dream divine,
O Love, behold, we turn to thee and pray,
Even to these heavens of thine !

Now while the perfect cool of morning holds
The seas that freshen upward to these caves,
Laughing ev'n to the breezy upland wolds
With joy of their high waves.

The blue wolds that far up we see arise ;
But here, in this shrill-blowing roughen'd bay
Watch the long waters and the grey-cool skies
Melt dimly far away.

In sea and heaven O prove we not thy name
The best man's lips have found to call thee by,
These things that pour balm on our human shame
And our souls glorify ;

Bidding approach such heavenly thoughts of thee,
And our poor fateful life's forgetfulness,
We seem as these waves rapturously free,
Pure with their fearless stress.

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But now, we thank thee, no hard mystery
Hides thee, no creed man vainly toils to learn,
To blind the wings of worship, but our eye
May look and straight discern.

For tho' we may not see thy very face,
Yet thy sure presence fills our spirits's sight
Since this thy earth smiles with thy peace and grace
As with the broad sunlight.

There is no shadow then in thy clear creed
Which is those washing seas, the heaven's plain sphere
Pure alters where thy pity man may read,
And worship without fear.

But it is we sin-born and Fate-oppressed
Offer to thee on the sad life we live
Fear and no worship :—yet thro' these have gussed
How free thou wilt forgive !

Therefore we would not call thee king or lord,
Tyrannous names, our fear and pride approve,
But by the holiest, best that man adored
Or angels spoke—even Love.

O then knowing this how sure shines forth this truth
How dim soever we its depth to cleave,
'Thou ne'er forget'st man who most needs thy ruth.
We worship, we believe !

For in the most sunk soul, this earth's worst scorn
Thy love abides still, since from heaven we fell :
In every heart of all men ever born
Thou dwellest and wilt dwell !

(12 stanzas missed out)

We have got the answer from Hastings and, terms being moderate, we have decided to go. My brothers most likely will go on Monday, but I am going to Oxford on that day, and shall not be able to get to Hastings till Tuesday. The place is 2, Plynlimmon Terrace. I suppose you will write to me there next ; but please don't write until you



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can send me some of your poems or I shall be very much disappointed. Your description of your Gresidale walk I appreciated very much. It is one of the places I did not go to ; but my brothers went and they at once remembered, when I told them of the wrong way up which you describe, only they came down that way instead of going up.

2 Plynlimmon Terrace
Hastings
Sussex
1887

My dear Binyon,

I was very glad to get your long letter. Sorry you could not go by Steamer, you will have lost a treat. Anyhow you ought to enjoy yourself among those beautiful bays and creeks, which no doubt you are doing. I should go, if I were you, some day across to Lundy Island. I have heard it is enchantingly wild and lovely, but I believe it is only at certain times that it is possible to go. As to the "Ilex Grove", the sea must have taught you—not only the metre—but the whole poem. It is a marvellous piece of sea-music ; and I confess I have scarcely ever read lines so fine and noble in sound as these.

And the air comes burden'd with a heavy hearted theme,

The doom of burying waters ever thwarted by the land.

The wild sad South flowing over desolation

To the cold cliffs ringing with the anger of that vext strand.

This applies especially to the third of these, which is masterfully subtle melody. The metre indeed is as original and as spontaneously elicited from the feeling as some of Browning's ; like "Love Among the Ruins"—where the slow move of the music expresses wonderfully the sad yet smiling quiet of the scene and feeling ; or "The Grammarian's Funeral" in which the climbing and aspiring sound of the lines is particularly noticeable. The "Ilex Grove" I think also is as noble in idea as in its sound ; such lines as

"Nothing to hope for but from the seas around."

Please send me the poem when it is finished. Thank you for what you call "that unconscionable rigmarole". It is very suggestive ; and such hints, (as I have said before) are invaluable to me. You have

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not been the only one to think some of my verses have a similarity to Matthew Arnold's. My brother once remarked to me that he thought I imitated Matthew Arnold in many of my poems. You may believe me when I say, if I have imitated him, it is perfectly unconsciously—I could not help it. At any rate latterly I have tried my best not to be like him. You speak quite truly when you say—I have not yet form'd a definite style. In fact I am quite aware I am merely feeling my way in poetry, with some doubt as to whether I shall ever emerge into the light, (if indeed I am destined to be a writer in English verse, which again is doubtful.) You are right too in saying I should sooner compass this by writing than by reading. I have felt the same thing, and lately have been quite prolific, tho' on the whole what I have written is very inadequate ; a thing to be expected, when the quantity of one's writing exceeds the progress one makes in general respects. Altogether your advice comes very welcome to me, in this Scylla & Charybdis thro' which I am steering, this strait between the Heaven and Hell of poetry. I have bought a Byron, for use as a model. I suppose you do not advise me to go thro' those vast poetical and moral deserts of his dramas and tales to find some stray oasis here and there. The Prisoner of Chillon I like, the Dreamer I like, and the "Lines Written at Missolonghi" I think very fine as also the "Incantation in Manfred", and Don Juan is one of the sublimest peaks of wit and scorn (with that powerful passage of the shipwreck at sea) but that it seems to be one huge retort (not wholly unjust) to Horace's "*Casta matrona*" and *uxor pudica* etc. etc. and might have spared us so much of it—but on the other hand I think those eastern tales horribly wearisome, still if you advise me to read them for the strength and beauty of separate lines in them I will. I am doubting whether not to change this complete edition of Byron for Matthew Arnold's selections of him in the Golden Treasury series, tho' I do not know what they are like. It is sure however to be a good selection since it is by the foremost critic of our time. I can nowhere find "Prometheus" in this so called complete edition of Byron. Tell me please which of the poems you think worth reading, if there are any more you have not mentioned. The blank verse in Cain, etc. is simply accursedly cursable (I use a word of your own coinage). Byron's sentiments also I feel sometimes inclined to swear at most vehemently : not that they are improper (I rather reverence him for that) but they have an indescribable tone which I hate. I suppose then you would

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rather I did not follow Matthew Arnold so much, seeing that his "air" is so easy to catch, especially by such as me? I have also read the greater part of "Balder Dead"—a most noble thing altogether. I think one of the greatest triumphs of M. Arnold's art is the successful way in which he has used the Homeric simile—The whole poem has the calm and stateliness of Sophocles. "Tristram and Iseult" too is a beautiful poem: Swinburne treats the same subject in a different and, I think, very inferior way.

I suppose you have by this time reached Devonshire. How have you liked your sea-voyage: it must be, I should think, very delightful. Perhaps you have been too to Belfast: for it is not far across the channel. You seem to have pretty much exhausted the walks round about Keswick—Sea Fell was a hard climb, especially if you went the West Water way tho' very few people think of doing that. Have you not been to the Sty Head Pass? We went on a most transparently clear day, with "a live translucent bath of air"—and could see all along the Cumberland coast out to the sea.—I think I shall have to close now. I hope this letter won't get there before you.

Yours faithfully,
Manmohan Ghose.

2 Plynlmmon Terrace
Hastings,
August 8th, Monday.

My dear Binyon,

We came here last Tuesday all right, only by a dreadfully slow train. I like Hastings very much—it is delightful on this cliff especially where we are staying. But I confess the sea is better than the land, most of all this weather when it is too hot to stir. I have seen Ecclesbourne and Fairlight which are pretty, but it is too hot to go for longer walks. When it becomes cooler, I shall take some of the walks you mention.—I was much delighted with your letter and especially with your poems. I don't know which of them I like best. Where did you get the metre of the "Ilex Grove"? Did you invent it? The music is quite wonderful, so fresh and strange, and unconventional. Perhaps however the blank verse piece without a name is clearer in

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idea, do you not think so? I liked it very much, as also that noble simile, and the lovely lines you called "An April Day" which were charmingly sweet and lyric. May I please ask what is the word in the last line of the blank verse. Is it "modillions"—I have never heard the word before. Please send me any more you have written if it is no trouble.—I am glad you were pleased with what I sent. I hardly dared hope it. Your hints and suggestions for diction are invaluable; I don't think you are at all too severe on me. In fact I had begun to feel the exclusively Saxon diction pall on me, and have brought in Latin words here and there in the latest things I have written, but I am afraid far from successfully. I either tend to become prosaic, or introduce that "horrible mixture" of Swinburne's (especially the case in a poem on the "Necessity of a Republic" which I wrote last, an altogether inflated and prosaic affair). Thank you very much for your advice, which I will try to follow. What do you think of Rossetti's style; he is Latin enough generally.—By the way have you seen Swinburne's brutal attack on Walt Whitman in the *Fortnightly*, and what do you think of it? After behaving so badly, turning renegade and worshipper of bloated bathos and female aristocracy (he is damn'd eternally and without hope), I think he might have spared us this swinish attack, (it is full of filthy expressions) on a man greater in most respects than himself,—a quite bare-faced recantation of his former opinions on Whitman. With fiendish ingenuity he has entitled his paper "Whitmania" and admirers of Whitman "Whitmaniacs". This has quite upset my faith in Swinburne: I believe his republicanism, atheism etc. are all got up, not genuine.—Surely a man can have no back-bone who is eternally chopping about. How different from Shelley, so nobly consistent from end to end, that you cannot help believing in him with the perfect faith of a child: indeed I could go blindfold with Shelley—even if I did not understand him, trusting he could never deceive. Swinburne and L. Morris are evidently both bidding for the Laureateship, and it is a question who will get it. Swinburne has his unorthodoxy against him, but the butter he has served up lately to the court people, must atone for a good deal: and certainly his poetic fame is greater than L. Morris.

I should be very thankful, if you would give me a good model to follow in style. Do you think really Byron is the best? I suppose, though, you could not have a better model than Matthew

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Arnold for the form to cast your poetry in. Please tell me what you think.

I have been reading lately Lodge's "Rosalind". It is a most lovely pastoral, somewhat artificial indeed but naturally so, and written, in the richest and most glowing style. It is not so wearisomely pedantic as Lily's Euphues, and has more of a plot than Sidney's Arcadia, tho' not the showery freshness and clearness of Sidney; and there are the sweetest songs scattered over it; one notably beautiful, beginning

Love in my bosom like a bee,
Doth suck his sweet,
Now with his wings he plays with me,
Now with his feet.

which no doubt you know, and also that gorgeous coloured "Description of Rosalind", which Palgrave compares to the pictures of Paolo Veronese and Tintoretto. Have you read Shakespeare's "As You Like It"? He has taken the plot of that play from "Rosalind", and reading both quite impresses me with the power of Shakespeare's mind. He has not altered a single circumstance, only omitted a little to make it more dramatic, yet the contrast is complete between the two. By the mere passing of that tale thro' Shakespeare's mind, the characters have taken the warmest life, and passionate vividness, while in Lodge these are to say the least very vague and undefined. In "As You Like It" there is that little side-touch, which tells so much, how Shakespeare must have loved and revered Marlowe—

Dead Shepherd, now I find thy saw of might
"Who ever loved, that lov'd not at first sight!"

(The end of the letter missing)

2 Plynlmmon Terrace
Hastings
Sussex
1887

My dear Binyon,

What a bad correspondent you must think me to be sure; and I really have'nt a proper excuse, so it is no use trying to apologize. Today I saw to my great delight an advertisement that Benson's Company were coming next week to the Gaiety Theatre here and playing Shakes-

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perian and Old English Comedy—I shall then be able to see your cousin act—I wonder if I shall recognise him.

I quite understand that it is only Byron's style you wished me to imitate—indeed I should never be able to write Byronic poetry if I attempted it—I mean in sentiment and idea. The sentiment is very flabby and contemptible in the main—I cannot think why such a poet as Matthew Arnold can find so much to admire in him as a poet. That satire on George IV I thought specially fine when I first read it. I have found "Prometheus" and read it—it is a splendidly compressed and powerful poem. By the way you were talking of Dr. Philip Bailey, the author of "Festus". Some one asked me lately what I thought about "Festus", but I have never read it—What do you say? I know, some people think it exceedingly fine. Thank you for your promise of sending Swinburne's Byron. I should like very much to see his early opinions. Have you seen Swinburne's attack on Byron in the Nineteenth century (some time ago)—this is "*oratund oratory*", if you like—a most merciless thing, but true enough from Swinburne's point of view.

I am glad you think "Psyche" your best poem. I have always considered it so; it is in my opinion your purest and most faultless production.

But the great charm (to me) and distinctive feature of your poetry is a seraphic air that pervades it—which always reminds me of a sunset or a sunrise, in the glow of which the spirit stands with face heavenward and wings strained and half afloat—Well, I have used an elaborate simile—you must forgive me for it—but I was only trying to express what I feel. This "air" that you have is quite as distinctive as that of Matthew Arnold's—and stamps the greatness of a poetic nature. I am sorry you think my praise too generous and lavish. I only say what I feel—I do not and never shall attempt to criticize—at least, never such poetry as yours; indeed, I think, nothing is more presumptuous and conceited as the criticism of a modern critic. Why does he not write something as good or better than the poem he runs down—I should then believe him. It is all very well for a *poet* to criticize because he must know about things; but for a *critic* to do so, who never has written poetry and does not know how inconceivably hard it is to write well—I think it most contemptibly conceited. I must disagree with you about Lodge's "Rosaline". However glorious and

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lyric that may be—I think “Psyche” excells it in more than one way ; never once does it fall beneath the poem you tried to emulate in lyric passion and fervour, and as being a whole idea well developed it has a claim to precedence of “Rosaline”. I have shown “Psyche” to people who do not pretend to pure and high taste in poetry and they were quite charmed with it.

I was surprised to see that the “Portrait” is meant to be of yourself. It did once flash on my mind that it might be yours (when I read such poems as the blank verse one on wasted love)—but I dismissed the idea as quite incompatible with the general character of your poetry. You will forgive me, if I say that it is rather morbid : in no poem of yours can you be said to “bode”—you must surely have written it in a fit of melancholia.

As for your ballad I liked it exceedingly. It is short—much shorter than I expected—but that is a merit perhaps and it is full of fire and spirit—I liked these lines especially—

“It seems as all the *hurrying air were peopled*
in pursuit.”

“The thunder and the *scornful salutation of*
the sea”

As well as the refrain of “*sea*” at the end of every tenth line—which is an original idea in that special form—at least, I have never seen anything like it before. But perhaps the most exquisite touch of all which with one phrase brings out the full pathos of the thing—is

Then bear me well, good Rollo : *we shall*
sleep within the sea

This is far the finest thing in it, tho’ probably you will not think so. I dare say it cost you no trouble—the best expressions come out like that. The lines that follow give to my mind the most vividly weird and real picture I have ever seen—

The moon comes out ; the stately knight
upon his stately steed

Dark against the streaming spray stands
quiet for the deed.

That “*dark*” again is a splendid touch. This ballad is worthy of Coleridge.

We are going to stay at Hastings a little more than a week from today. I should like to go home earlier, but money has to come from

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my father, before we can pay our rent here. So we stay a little longer. You are at home probably by this time. Why do you want me so much to go to Oxford? I am afraid it will be an impossible thing—even if I go there—to stay long enough to get a degree—and that is the only thing worth going thro' an university career for. But my father will not be able to afford the money to keep me there so long.

So at most I can only go there for a little while—But I have heard nothing from my father yet on the subject. It is really no imposture—(the expenses at Christ Church)—Mr. Sampson, the Tutor, there told me that I could not do it much under £ 200 a year. I have no wish to go to the University, and I cannot think why you should so insist on it. Most likely if I did go there, I should have to return to India—which may the gods forbend! If I do stay in London—I shall be separated from you for a few years, but that will be far better than if I have to depart to that land I love so much, but which it would be fatal for my feet to tread—fatal I mean to any faint genius there may be in me—fatal to my friendship with you—and fatal to my doing any good to my own country and I think I have no other earthly ties to name.

You have no need to say "If what you say is true, about India". It is a lamentable fact. I wish to Heaven it was not true—but there it is; known indeed to few, but fact all the same. I wish I could speak calmly about it for then you would more readily believe me—but I can't. The devilishness of their machinery of tyranny is shown in one thing. It is an incontestable fact that the police are sanctioned to torture people secretly, not openly) to elicit the truth or rather falsehood from them. I will tell you another thing, a nice little story taken word for word from an article of Seymour Keay's in the Nineteenth Century—I must first tell you that there is a "Salt Tax" on the people and remember that salt is a scarcity in India. This is the delectable tale.

"I have myself seen a wretched peasant at early dawn seek out a remote spot on a desolate sea-shore, and, in momentary dread of detection, set to work to provide a little salt for his squalid and well nigh starving household. Far too poor even to possess a spade or trowel, destitute of aught save the rag wrapt round his loins, he scratched with his naked hands a little trough. The advancing tide turn'd this

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into a shallow pool, which the hot wind and glare of the Indian sun dried up before evening when the tide return'd. Wearily he wandered nightly to the spot to let in new water. In three or four days on the bottom of the trough a thin crust of salt was form'd. He collected this by scraping it from the clay, and tying it up in a corner of his waist-cloth, he started home as if he had gain'd a prize. He was stopped at the door of his hut by a revenue officer, who confiscated his salt, and ordered him into confinement. Wild with hunger and disappointment he made a desperate resistance, wounded the officer, and in the result was condemn'd to 5 years penal servitude".

You know I suppose that without salt in some way or other people cannot live. No more do the Indians ; thousands of them die of diseases from want of salt—children grow up sickly—and millions are in the condition of that man, whose story is told above. So intense is the craving for salt that people will grub for the salt mixed in the soil of the country and eat mud and salt together—for if they separated the salt from the earth they would have to pay a heavy fine. And it only needs to eat a certain amount of mud to kill a man.

You ask "what can be done ? And why do not we get some English statesmen to champion our wrongs." Well, in the first place, how are we to arouse the English people, who are naturally slow, tho' generous, and will not see a thing unless it is put right before their eyes. India and her wrongs are 8000 miles distant. The Englishmen in India find this a very profitable state of things ; they are fat and comfortable ; why make a rude change ? So yearly they announce officially all the fine things done in India, improvement of army, and navy, schools, etc., which can be run off very glibly—how happy and contented the people are etc.—No one in England knows the real state of affairs, and if a solitary voice (whether English or Indian) is raised to denounce those secret iniquities—it is drown'd in the chorus of self-laudation at the India Office ; and John Bull is practical, likes things that are officially announced, he can believe those. Besides people naturally close their eyes to uncomfortable truths. No English statesman would speak on a subject that was not well-known and interesting to the people. Besides Indians, you must remember are a despised race, and their words cannot gain much credit, if they dare speak. (This is in India—For in England men of genius like Naoroji and Lalmohan Ghose have spoken out and been listened to).

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A Revolution, as you say, would make an utter wreck of India—she could never recover the blow. But I am not thinking of that. It is the holy principle of vengeance that will be justified. Tho' I do not believe in this principle when applied to individuals and after this life, I do on this earth and applied to nations. No harm whatever to the English government ; they are quite innocent—The English are a warm-hearted and generous people—but please do not call the English officials in India—Englishmen—unless you wish to divest all the glory and dignity that has gathered for centuries round that name from it at one stroke. If you wish to know the real truth, I will give you when I come home two Nos. of the Nineteenth century, with articles by J. Seymour Keay on the "Spoliation of India". They are very dry, for they are a collection of hard facts collected from official reports, statistics, etc.—but these are more terribly eloquent in their reality than all the highest pitched eloquence and boastful quietism of the most eloquent of our Anglo-Indian opponents. They will give you a much better explanation than I can. If you do not believe these, I have no hope. As for me I am going to throw politics over board and have nothing more to do with them. The Fates have been kind for once and have cast my lot in England. I must leave my unhappy country to her own woes ; she will go the way she is destined whatever that be. And indeed I could help her little. I shall bury myself in poetry simply and solely. I wrote a kind of political poem, but I shall tear that out, and forswear such things forever.

Republic or monarchy—what does it matter, when one cannot change the existing state of affairs ? I am resolved to forget politics, so that no one shall know even to which side I belong. But one word more about India. People are very glib about that famine. But as an argument it amounts to absolutely nothing. Since the English have got possession of India, famines have increased till they occur now about yearly, some being great and some small—while under native rulers a famine occurred in about fifty years or a century. Thanks to the warm sympathy of the *English people* (not the Anglo-Indians) large sums of money were as you say, raised for relief of that special famine. But you happy people in England know nothing of famines—after relief has been raised, it has to be organised, and before that can be accomplished, Death has done his work or the greater part of it. Verily in famines prevention is all, cure is nothing.



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You ask "Has England no claim upon India for benefits in the past?" People have a very mistaken idea : they think England has brought civilization into India. India had a civilization when the English were barbarians, and it was there just the same when England negotiated India into her hands (I won't say conquered, for India never was conquered by the English, excepting certain portions). We do not want our civilization done away with, and European civilization brought in—we want the old frame-work of Indian civilization reconstructed and new life put into it. The people were much happier before the English came there—I repeat again it is only *myself and the educated class of Indians* who at all have to thank the English for anything. And rather than have millions of people in the state they are now, I would rather the small minority of educated Indians were uneducated in the English sense of the term, and Indian rule brought back. Of course I know this is impossible.

As to the Revolution—you mistook me there again. If you and I were to go to India tomorrow and look about us you could only then understand why it is we speak at all about Revolution. The relation between the rulers and ruled are strained enough but that is not the worst—the danger is in the misery of the lower classes of the people. Fortunately these are not all Mahommedan. The greater part are Hindus, and the Hindus are noted for their patience and long suffering. But even they must yield some day to the instinct of self preservation—when the question is "starve or fight." Had it been the other way, and the Mahommedans been the majority I have no hesitation in saying that there would have already been a revolution or if it did not succeed India would be much what Englishmen have made Ireland—a land of crime and desolation. The educated class are a few thousands among the seething and hungry millions, and tho' they are lovers of the English rule and would be most willing to restrain the popular fury, yet they would be swept to annihilation before the fierceness of numbers. Among this educated class there are three classes—firstly these who shut their eyes to the miseries of their uneducated countrymen—and are for everything as it is. These vilely selfish people, I am glad to say, are the fewest. By far the larger number see the distress, and are for patient agitation for reform. A very few, like myself, see further than these. By all means let us agitate for reform—but if reforms are

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not going to be made any quicker than at present, I cannot help foreboding something bad will happen. Something *must* come. I hope most sincerely, that it is not going to be anything so serious as a revolution. It would be the ruin of India. But what can I do? I must forebode. You see India is in a situation so utterly new, what no other country has been in before. The serious and fatal thing about it is that the miserable and discontented people are uneducated, and cannot guide themselves by proper and legal reform. In the meantime I watch and hope—and my two hopes are in the patience of the Hindus—and the generosity of the *English people* (not the Anglo Indians). One thing hangs like a dead weight on the probability of this generosity being roused—There are in England heaps of Anglo-Indians who have served their time in India and have come home to live on large pensions (the money coming from the half-starving Indians)—These have relations etc. in India, and are bitterly opposed to any change in the system of government which has made them so rich. So when some solitary voice of warning in England is raised against the injustice and oppression in India—it is drowned in the clamours of the home-come Anglo-Indians, who only too successfully brand him with the name of alarmist and hush the whole thing up. If you were to go to India and look with an unprejudiced eye, you would see that the system of government is rotten to the core. It is most unjust—everything is in favour of the rulers and to the destruction, I might say, of the ruled (by the ruled I mean the uneducated Indians—the educated Indians are well enough off, as I said before). In the law courts bribery is the order of the day—I mean the bribery of policemen and underlings, yet you hear nothing of all this in England—because it would be to the prejudice of the Anglo-Indians for you to know it. One thing will illustrate the truth of this. This August there has been a great visitation of cholera over the North West Provinces. Yet while all this was going on, no one in England heard anything about it till one morning there appeared in the English papers this laconic piece of news—"70,000 people have died of cholera in the North West Provinces". The Indian Government concealed their shameful helplessness to cope with the difficulty (it is the duty of Government to take sanitary precautions so that such things should not occur) until it was dangerous to conceal it any longer. If they were *not* to blame, at least they might have

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sent news earlier so as not to take by sudden surprise English people whose relations were out there.

As to the objections of Englishmen you quote they are only an echo of what Anglo-Indians tell them. Everything forsooth is going on all right. Trust the Anglo-Indians for that ! (but *I* say, let them thank the patience and impotence of the Hindus !) You will see when I show you Seymour Keay's article, whether the facts about torture are true or not : it comes from an official report. I can only answer your argument about torture on the continent by saying that state-torture of criminals in prison and torture of free and innocent people by police to get money or falsehood out of them are two very different things. If you apologize for such conduct by saying it is not so bad as the Spaniards' and Russians' you only degrade the English character which we expect to be far nobler than that.

Well, what a long letter ! I hope you will be able to get thro' it. I would write volumes to convert you. But I dare say you still think me a mere alarmist. Still I have a bare hope you may think it true ; at any rate I would never take such trouble with any one else. I would only meet with the same cold and weary unbelief which every one meets, who tries the same task. It is a sickening business. I am resolved for my part to turn over the page, and forget it. As to what I said about Revolution, you must forgive me for it. The bitterness of my countrymen's woes has turned my head and soured my nature, and made my spirit which is naturally gentle violent and discontented. At least I am happy in having a friend with head and heart unseared by any such thing who can point me to the primal and childlike gentleness of human nature.

I am writing a "Song of Laughter" which promises to be a better thing than much I have written of late.

We are going back next Tuesday to London.

Yours ever faithfully,

Manmohan Ghose



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Christ Church,
Oxford
Sat. night.
Oct. 1887.

My Dear Binyon,

I have eaten so enormous a dinner tonight, that I am doubtful whether I should be equal to the toil of a letter, especially such a letter as should be worthy to recount all the adventures or more properly misadventures and the fatigue I have undergone, since my arrival in Oxford. Besides, the history of the past few days is visible as thro' a mist amidst the fumes of a Ch.Ch. dinner. But with the help of a cup of tea, which these own hands have made (very execrably), and a roaring fire and silence and the simmering of the kettle, I will essay the task.

We started from Paddington, my brother and myself, at—I think it was 10 a.m. and the train puffed up to Oxford thro' drizzlement of a bitter wind and sky at 12. We then drove up to the Tom Gate, and I asked the porter where my rooms were. I was vaguely directed thither, and stumbled up murderously high stairs (about 8 or 9 flights) to No. 8.8 Peckwater quad, which are my quarters. At the bottom of the stairs I met my scout and it was he who led us up. He is a man with thin French physiognomy, rather sharp but not sinisterly so, of profuse and obsequious courtesy; for he has a continual flow of Yes Sir, yes sir, yes sir—which he says most often three times at once. I think I know the way to the scout character. His chief feature is the extreme and feverish desire to make a deep impression on you of his careful and anxious attentions on your behalf. The scout proceeded to bring forth a heap of papers, lists of the crockery and hardware I had to get, what was indispensable and what not, and recommended tradesmen for excellence and cheapness. At this I looked askance at him, for I remembered Dicken's warning. But a freshman is really a helpless creature. So I sighed inwardly at the thought of fast vanishing £.s.d. and resigned myself to fate. Perhaps the scout's heart was touched at my submissive meekness, but I do not know. A scout's is so polished a character that he is quite opaque—you cannot get beneath the surface. At any rate he is always genial and courteous, and a most admirable phenomenon until you get your tradesmen's bills. Then your feelings change, however sweet-tempered you may boast to be, and you hardly know whether

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to swear or tear your hair. You stretch your wits on the rack, especially if, like me, you have a limited purse which you must adapt to the dearness of the place, how to cramp and screw your money into the required space. But I become tedious.

My rooms are at the very summit of the building, with two small windows in deep recesses, secured outside by strong iron gratings (which look like dungeon-bars) for fear the tenant should escape on to the roof—which would otherwise be a very easy matter. The apartment is indescribably small in space and exceedingly low, but it is marvellous what a quantity of furniture it contains in proportion to its size. I enumerate (at the risk of growing tedious) an ample bookshelf the base of which is the cupboard, and holds all my crockery and provisions—a long sofa—an arm-chair, an easy-chair, a rocking-chair, a wooden arm-chair to sit at table, a dinner table, two side-tables, three ordinary chairs, another cupboard, a chest of drawers with writing desk—and a mirror—there is not much open space left. The whole room gives an idea of comfort and a delightful battered appearance in the furniture suggests many things to the mind of the gazer. I was charmed with it, and was rather scornful when the scout remarked they were the worst rooms in that region, and few undergrads had ever come into them. It was for this reason that the valuation of the furniture is so low. I forgot to say, the system of furniture at Ch. Ch. is this. The man who had my rooms before me left his furniture and established an agent here when he went away to pay him the rent of it from the next comer. The valuation is only £ 15 which is relievingly small. But I must proceed with my history.

At 2 p.m. there was to be the beginning of the matric ceremony. So we went into the High and had lunch at a Restaurant ; then my brother went to see about ordering some of the necessary articles while I proceeded to the Hall to be matriculated. We had to wait some time (about 20 freshmen of us) until all the Dons had assembled, when we all ranged ourselves on a form at the bottom of the Hall, while the Dean called out the names of scholars first, then commoners. I was called one of the first and approached with somewhat faltering steps to the table. The Dean was very gracious and said in a grave, mild voice—"Mr. Ghose, I hear very highly of you from Prof. Max Muller ; I hope you will prove yourself worthy of your election."

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Then I was handed over to my Tutor, Mr. Hobhouse, who again handed me over to the treasurer. The treasurer remarked coldly—"Where is your fee"? I was utterly dazed at the suddenness of the thing. (For, if you remember, I all along thought, from Dr. Markby's words, that they would give me £20 of the Schol. to pay immediate expenses) While a chill perspiration broke over me, the treasurer said blankly "Haven't you brought it?" I could only say "No". "Bring it to me this afternoon". At which I answered stupidly "Yes"—tho' I well knew my brother hadn't more than £3 at most in his pocket, and as it turned out there is not more than £10 at the bank just now. So I retired with the intimation to be at the Canterbury Gate by 4.15 in cap and gown to march to the Vice-Chancellor's to be enrolled in the University books. I went back to my rooms agitated more than my wont, and explained the matter to my brother, who was cheerfully sitting by the fire. I suggested we had better go and consult Dr. Markby about it; for I was mortally afraid of the Ch. Ch. Dons. In my simplicity I imagined people at Oxford were the bond-slaves of form and custom. Then we had a hunt for Dr. Markby at All Souls' and Balliol but, since it was the afternoon, a bad time for finding people in the colleges, he was out. Likewise was Prof. Max Muller whose house however is not far from Balliol, and we were proceeding towards it, when the Professor and Prof. Nettleship passed us walking arm-in-arm. I was afraid to accost him as I have never spoken to him. Eventually we returned to Ch. Ch. and fortunately found Mr. Warren, the Junior Censor at his rooms. He made no difficulty about the money, to my great relief—and said they would make some arrangement about it, pay it at the end of the term or something of that sort. At 4.15 we were matriculated finally and enrolled in the University—and also presented with a Statute-Book by the Vice-Chancellor. But the wearing of cap and gown in all weathers is a cruel practise. I was chilled to the marrow. For it is a bitterly cold air here.

I have fared pretty well since then. Of course it is impossible to avoid indiscrepancies at first, but perhaps it is a good thing that you should not, for you learn much more when you are once undeceived than you lose by the ignorance of deception.

My brother went back early to London; he had hoped to see more of Oxford—but the day was so cloudy and inclement with intermittent rain, quite inimical to sight-seeing.

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I soon struck up an acquaintance with the fellow opposite my door, a Freshman and a Science scholar but the older under-graduates are an unapproachable set of people—Cookson's friend, the nameless Senior student has not yet called on me, nor any one else. My solitude has only been broken by subscription-hunters who departed empty. In the evenings M'Pherson and myself have mutually invited one another, and talked over cigarettes on different subjects. He is intelligent and not utterly and apathetically British—has read a good deal of literature and is one of the few ordinary people I've come across who prefer Browning to Tennyson. Last night he borrowed Shelley's poems of me : he has an unusual and commendable desire to read anything good that he has not read before.

I have not joined any Clubs—indeed I have so much to do this term, that there is small time for recreation. My Tutor has given me an immense quantity to read for Mods. and specified lectures to attend during the week. I shall try and get some of these remitted—or how else am I to get my Mathematics ready in time for Responsions, Dec.-3 ? There are different tutors for different things. Hobhouse, a very nice man altogether, is my Tutor proper and supervises my reading etc.—Onions my composition—and Sampson, the Senior Censor, my mathematics. The only thing I have joined is the Junior Common Room, where they have debates, cigarettes, stamps, sweetmeats etc.

Sunday night.

I attack the letter again over a cup of tea. I have had two calls this evening. A Freshman from the other end of this side of Peckwater Quad dropt in just after Hall—a fellow who comes from Westminster, and I promised to answer his call. It seems that Peckwater teems with pompous young aristocrats who are unemployed except in making rows, lighting bonfires, etc. I am hemmed in on all sides by aristocratic names. One is Mr. P. H. Massingbird Mundy. But for M'Pherson I am in exile in these regions. A little later Crawley called, and stayed till the closing of the Gates. Crawley was told he had narrowly escaped being 'ploughed' in Arithmetic in his 'Responsions, tho' he came off with flying colours in Classics. This news made me feel gloomy. Indeed, it is extra-ordinary ; about half the fellows have been 'ploughed' in 'Responsions' this time. Crawley has on his staircase an Indian, a commoner, named Mukherjee, on

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whom I intend going to call, as he is a Freshman. I think I shall join the Indian Institute in time, and get acquainted with some of my countrymen there. I know of two at Balliol, Government scholars there, both Bengalis, but they are senior men.

I ought to say something about my way of living. I am called at 7.30 in the morning, the scout lighting the fire and preparing breakfast while I dress. I attend roll-call at 8. which simply means going to the Senior Censor and bidding him good-morning. I might go to chapel, but it would be too tedious—for they do not sing on week-days. The Choristers, little boys dressed in gowns like scholars, sing very beautifully at the Cathedral and brighten an otherwise gloomy and melancholy affair. I must attend roll-call four times in the week, otherwise I am gated. If I failed to present myself either at roll-call or chapel on Sunday, such a delinquency would be visited with great severity—gating for three days being the result. You must be clad in a surplus (do you spell surplus or surplice ?) on Sundays and Saint's days, if you attend chapel. After roll-call I have breakfast, and always make my own tea. The morning is occupied in lectures and reading. Luncheon comes about 1 p.m. and the afternoon ought to be devoted to out-door exercise ; but owing to overpress of work this term I must be satisfied with a short walk, or else detriment to my Mathematics would result. Dinner at Hall is at 7 p.m. on week days, 6.15 on Sundays. After Hall it is usual to visit some one of your friends, or receive a visit till 9. when the gates are closed—if you stay with or detain a friend after that hour, you must do so with the payment of a sum of 3d. After 9. you are supposed to work till what hour you please. I am taking tea at 9. to prevent the somnolence and the heaviness that pervades my eyelids at that hour. Non-workers generally prolong their festivities till far past midnight.

What do you think ? Mr. Sampson this morning at roll-call came up and examined my gown exclaiming, "Why, Mr. Ghose, you have a Bachelor gown." I felt perfectly ashamed, and am resolved to change it first thing to-morrow at "Searig's" in Queen St. I have an extremely sensitive nature, and such mistakes of ignorance quite overwhelm me. Well, I think this letter is long enough. I hope you are not so weariable to read, as I am prone to write these interminable epistles. I believe I have climbed the weariest heights of garrulous-

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ness and sounded the lowest abysses of 'longueurs'. But you will forgive me. It will indeed be a dreary time, till you come to Oxford—there are really not any appreciative and intimate friends I am likely to make here, and even if there were they would but be of a sufferable kind, and could not alter my feelings. At present I endure a species of banishment in these aerial regions. So, considering all things, you must pardon this uninspired gossip, quite unworthy to meet your eyes, and please do not sacrifice much time or trouble in answering but you may imagine with what delight I shall welcome a letter. I myself must contrive to write letters to you now and then at odd hours besieged as I am with an army of toils.

Yours most faithfully,
Manmohan Ghose

P.S. I have written nothing, nor do I expect to be enabled to do so for a period to come ; but I have my head full of plans and prospects which I should like to be rid of. I may write a few lines now and then, but I must not hope to accomplish anything prolonged or perfect, tho' my imagination was of late germinating with an abundance of ideas. I intended to write two stories, illustrating respectively the bliss and curse of the gift of imagination. And I have all the materials and ideas, but unhappily no time for my project of an essay on "the New Religion in India."

Christ Church
Oxford
Oct. 1887.

My dear Binyon,

I must humbly apologize for not answering you before this ; what must you think of me, especially after that beautiful poem you sent me, and asked me to criticize. But you have imposed a very hard burden on my shoulders. You have specially interdicted me one pleasure, that of praising your poem ; I dare say my praise, just as much as my censure is valueless from such an uncritical person as myself ; but you ought not to forbid me what is allowed to all uncritical people, the liberty of talking nonsense about what I admire.

But I think it is impiety and profanation for you to talk of "bombast" or "incongruity" in such a poem as the one before me. And as I must not praise, and cannot blame, I will simply tell you my impressions of your poem. It is a great improvement on the whole,

EARLY POEMS

and much clearer I should think, tho' I am not in a position to judge, as I knew the original lines so well by heart that no amount of elucidation would make it more transparent to me. But I think I observe two things in your alterations, one is an attempt to reduce the lines to a little more regularity of metre, and the other an endeavour to make the joints of the poem more clear and nakedly to the point. The first I must say I can't agree with. For instance you have three corresponding lines in three consecutive stanzas with the same beat on the first syllable.

"Fresh grass and daisies with their memories of the dew
Deep aisles of foliage over the noiseless ways."

Do you not think it would be better to put "the," as before, in the middle line? in this way the three initial adjectives would not be noticed. As I read for the first time, the sameness of beat was very obvious. "*Non erras multum, sed erras.*"

The things I liked best in your entirely new portions were the stanzas about "the forsaken Muses wandering thro' the twilight" and here it is a delight to get something personal from such an unpersonal person as you. The idea is well introduced at that point. You certainly have not neglected to take advantage of the resonance of movement your metre possesses to bring the poem to a noble and sonorous close. Now you ought to be satisfied with this criticism: for there is not one epithet of praise in it, and I have assumed the superior air of a critic, which is indeed quite hollow, but ought nevertheless to please you. Privately I think the "Ilex Grove" is the poem I like best of all yours which I have seen, at least one of the best.

I am sorry this letter will be so short. I have to work horribly hard, and am quite ill over it. What between loads of Mathematics and files of classics and the imperious necessity of paying back calls and going to people's rooms; (for society has become a necessity of my nature). I have little time to write, and that was the reason why I did not write earlier in the week. I heard from Crawley that they are going to send you up for Balliol; of course it is the best College here for work and reputation, and besides I know a great many people there; but I would much rather you went to Trinity; it is a more literary college and at Balliol they are sure to make a scholar work frightfully hard. I hope you won't think me conceited in saying this. I am more concerned for your imagination than your intellect;

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for I myself feel it very much against me just now, when I am making my way into House society and society in general to be made to work so awfully hard by these rapacious Dons, just because I am a scholar, and we have to work unless we wish our scholarships to be taken away or reduced in value. I wish I had plenty of money, and had come here as a commoner.

Do you know that I am already getting known in the House as a writer of English verse, and I have heard many vague rumours afloat to that effect.—M'Pherson very much admires "Niobe"—and I mean to show that poem to all who have the least poetry-reading propensity.

I am progressing so well in the good opinion of people here, that I have broken thro' caste and know members of more than one clique in the House. Nothing is more delightful than society at Oxford; the men are so intelligent and intellectual and they appreciate things that you might deem alien to people elsewhere, such as poetry, tho' one feature is peculiar—their aversion to exclusiveness in anything and the general all-roundness of their character.

It is true Science and Mathematics are generally thought degrading and classics is the subject in estimation of the majority. Science people, I know, are specially loathed, and a Mathematical degree at Oxford has an ill name, so that these have a rather bad time of it. Christ Church by the way is becoming quite Liberal; there is actually a minority of extreme Radicals and democrats here. Agnosticism or indifference to religion is also very fashionable, and some of the most clever men cultivate it. But there are also near Balliol Salvation Army barracks, and those frantic enthusiasts stir up their usual uproar and goad the spirits of men living in the part of the college near at hand. I think the very depths of religious bathos and short-sightedness have been reached by these curious people. They bear in my judgement an unique analogy to and are a repetition of those Bacchus-smitten worshippers of sensationalism of whom we catch a glimpse in Euripedes' *Bacchae*. Their god is the drunkenness of the feelings, as the god of the Bacchants was the drunkenness of the physical senses.

I have nailed up your portrait to the wall of my room—and I have your large eyes looking down over my head while I am reading. The outline is becoming dim, and I will ask you to rectify that when you

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come. Both Crawley and I are yearning for the day of your coming. He said, I think, you were going to stay a fortnight, which will be "soul-rejoicing" (as Bohn would say), if you can really do that. You must come to breakfast with me more than once, and I will regale you in true Oxford fashion - or if you like better come to Hall, as well. At any rate I hope to see you often. I think you will have no peace between Crawley and me.

I was extremely sorry I could not go to see your cousin act, with Crawley. I have had to work so hard, I found it impossible and those brutal Dons have robbed me of a true pleasure. How is your cousin ? I hope he is quite well, which he wasn't when I came to Oxford. I think I can promise to get you an Indian cap, if you would like one ; they are convenient for snooking-hours. I have many most amusing stories to tell you, especially about the extortion and rapacity of a certain Shylock in Oxford of which myself and Crawley have been victims ; and which I have eluded in the most gloriously brazen-faced manner ; but the issue is doubtful, and I will defer it to the next time.

I must really close now. This letter is going in Crawley's envelope.

Yours faithfully,
Manmohan Ghose

Christchurch,
December 12th 1887.

My dear Binyon,

Many thanks for your letter and especially for your verses. I was much pleased with them, and most with the last piece. You have written some few very pretty things in that metre, I remember ; and I hope you will not leave these out when you publish your poems. The first looks as if it came out of some ghastly αμύροσταγος affair ; what on earth is it about ? You must let me see the poem when finished. There is a clammy horror in some of the lines, but you soon idealize it with some beautiful couplets—

"To the sky,

I turned ; but the stars, smiling, bade me die—"

The madrigal is very musical, but—I don't think I have ever sunk to such depths of melancholy. What made you write such heart-broken lines ?

I am staying up at College till my *viva-roce* comes off, Saturday,

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at 10 a.m. I shall be down on that day. Thanks for your kindness in asking me to come and see you after Christmas. Also pray drop in some time at Cromwell Rd. I should be so pleased. I was half intending to come back to College by the New Year, and work here the rest of the Vac. But it seems they are going to turn the whole stair-case upside down, because of that fever haunted room, with fumigating, painting, and what not.

Thank Heaven, Responsions are over. If my arithmetic has not "ploughed" me, I am safe. I have already commenced hard work, and am beginning severely to neglect my intellect, (as a Chinaman would say). What do you think? I am reading Malthus. It is the book Shelley so often mentions and part of which is an answer to the ideal socialism of Shelley's father-in-law, Godwin. No amount of Malthus will make me Malthusian, but it certainly is a clever book, and one I was led to read by my interest in that particular question—the problem of over-population. It bears upon the question of Indian misrule, or rather I should say, upon false reasons given for the painful state of suppressed famine existing among the Indian masses.

I have also addicted myself to several other prosaic occupations, which would be of no interest to you. It is a good policy. Nothing can better make one feel the earthiness of fact, and the heavenliness of fiction. I read the 13th book of Odyssey to day, after forgetting for a term the divine simplicity and freshness of Homer.

I have not begun yet my poem for the Newdigate, except writing a few lines. You may trust me not to let it lapse. I am surprised you have so good an opinion of Walker's *verse*; yet you say he lacks inspiration. Do not the people who adjudge the prize, take poetry or inspiration into account? If that be the case I must say prize writing is a prostitution. I know very well, or at any rate I suspect your caution to me not to be too poetical was given because you know that I am prone to luxuriance and poeticism (I have coined the word) in my verse, but surely such a man as Palgrave would prefer if he could get a poem possessing true poetry (not ambitiously or violently poetical) to one that only betrayed an easy and classic versifier. I don't think Dick is much more. One thing set me against him very much. I tell you this secret in your ear. Du Pontet actually said to me that Dick's prize poem on the death of Saul had finer (I think he used the word "sublimar"!) lines than yours on Niobe, tho'

EARLY POEMS

yours was more poetic. O the astonishing and flat stupidity of people! I pity the man. Dick is too learned to be a *poet*, he has too much *elegance*, too little *truth*, and above all I can see in his face the star of poetry did not reign at his nativity. How could such a man whose personality is so unpoetic, have his name wedded to that of poet: They would irretrievably melt the one out of the other,—from Dr. Jekyll to Mr. Hyde, and from Mr. Hyde to Dr. Jekyll, as some people are, but readily acknowledges defects in anything he likes. I don't know who are his gods in poetry. He is fond, I know, of Ben Jonson's lyrics, Herrick's, and Shelley's smaller poems. He doats over—"I fear thy kisses, gentle maiden", and "Music when soft voices die".

You must have heard of course, of Dick's success in the Hertford. Cunning dissembler—he tells me, he is not sure about trying for the Newdigate. And the other day after the examination was finished, he told me he had no chance whatever. This is not modesty, I am sure; when he thus disassembles his conceit, Heaven only knows what he is up to! Mulvanee was distinguished in the Hertford. Both Dick and Du Pontet are trying for the Ireland, and are staying up to Saturday.

From all accounts they are 'ploughing' people right and left in Responsions, and there seems little chance for me. The rumour is that they want more money to build the new Schools which are being erected. It will be a horrible disappointment if I fail. You will see large and exciting placards in London, "Murder of an Oxford Don by an Oxford undergraduate!"

I am much afraid I do not know people enthusiastic enough to join us in the anthology. Perhaps we shall by degrees. It would be fortunate if we could get hold of a man with plenty of money. I have been asked, what kind of an anthology is it going to be, what is your plan? I can only say a lyrical one, but that does not seem to satisfy people.

You must excuse this inexpressibly dull letter, and not fall asleep over it. I don't feel up to anything better. Look to have some poetry next time tho' judging from my attempts at "Gordon" I don't seem to be in a poetic mood. You will be glad to hear I am getting more delightfully mad and insane daily; soon a veil of romantic eccentricity will shroud me. Oxford is peculiarly desolate; and everyone has gone down.

Yours sincerely,
Manmohan Ghose.

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PS. Do you remember some lines of mine written against the Athanasian creed? I wish you would suggest some emendations. James tells me he likes that the best of these things I lent him to read, but for some weakness of metre, I myself think the same: it really has more strength and exaltation than anything else I have written, and I think I shall add more stanzas and make it a poem.

I have lent James 'Orestes' and he shall soon have 'Niobe'. Did I tell you how 'Orestes' took MacPherson by storm—He frankly told me it was far finer than anything of yours, he had read,—and far finer than anything of mine (which of course is quite a superfluous remark) and that it was sublimer poetry than anything except Milton. I never met with such anomaly of character as MacPherson. Don't you think this term for him is a most happy one (not my own); "an intellectual innocent". Perhaps of all the people here I like James the best. It is true he is a Philistine radically, but one who is struggling in Philistine bonds and environments. And then he has such eager intelligence, always desirous of learning something new. He is not bigoted in his views.

Christ Church,
Oxford.
Sunday, Jan., 15

My dear Binyon,

I suppose you have by this time returned from Worthing. How have you enjoyed yourself there, and how is your cousin? Is the play finished, or have you anything to send me. I came back to Oxford on Friday in a most damnable fog. I was half-exanimate with cold by the time I reached here, where the city spires were muffled in moisture and its streets swimming with mud. I had the company of an Oriel man I knew, and we both rolled ourselves up in a blanket and slept till the train arrived at Oxford. I found everything as sleepy as myself: not half the people had come up, and lectures do not begin till Tuesday. But I saw all my tutors, and have my line of work marked out for me for this term. The "Agamemnon" and Tacitus with the inevitable Logic are some of my subjects. Aeschylus and those other folks would make a dainty pie, were it not embittered by mixture of the old ingredient, Arithmetic. It makes my heart ache to think of it.

EARLY POEMS

I am still zealous in the crusade I am fighting here in the cause of literature. I am sure I have done much to awaken an interest in that cause at Oxford ; for many intelligent people, particularly at Christ Church, half-dead to it before, have become quite interested. It only wants you to be here and together we might do much good in brightening some people's feelings and intellects, and establishing tolerable ideas of taste among the already enlightened : (this last is a dreadfully difficult task for their tastes are perverse and bigoted.) And our beneficence would reward us with consequent fame as aspirants in literature. Splendid idea ! let us regenerate Oxford by a great literary movement, as the 'great Matthew' and Clough did by a theological one.

I am sure there must be some literary people here, and I shall make it my duty to find them out. How else will England of the coming decades be peopled with critics, editors, etc. who make up our literary caste ?

My brother is looking out for my interests at the B.M. and has promised to talk to Mr. Lane Poole about me. This is wise policy, should anything happen to cut short my Oxford career.

I am still writing verse, but have done nothing worthy to send you. You would be pleased to see my earnest efforts to be "Attic". But I think now you showed great sagacity, when you advised me to write more prose, and suggested a romance. I sincerely doubt whether I should ever write a poem of any length. That being the case, I can only make up for it to any extent by fiction, which is so much the rage in England now. And I really can't see, if a novel theme be combined with noble treatment, why a romance should not be equal to poetry. The one is with rhythm, and the other without, but both are poetry. One thing distresses me and that is, that I must perforce introduce those trifles, which seem inevitable in a novel. But there has been a Catullus, and perhaps it may be my happy fate to put poetry into the most trivial things. That objection too would not tell so much, choosing as I do an Indian subject, in which novelty would tend to magnify little things.

I believe I told you that I had conceived the plot of an Indian tale already, which only requires to be developed and written. You need not fear I shall let it lapse. I have taken too much thought and trouble about it, and the idea is too good to be relinquished : a few scenes

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even have been roughly scrawled. I only wait to know one thing,—what is the genuine Indian way of talking. This I can get alone by knowing Bengali, which I have sedulously set myself to learn. In the meantime I have read a story with Bengali conversational phrases literally translated. You cannot imagine how simple and Homeric some of them are. I think I could create a striking and novel effect by introducing these sometimes. As for the customs wherewith to colour the incidents, memory and imagination will easily supply those.

Me miserum! You will be sorry to hear I'm much afraid no poem for the Newdigate will be forthcoming. I have no inspiration to write it, and conscience pricks me too much to let me send in anything that has not some pretence to poetry. As a matter of fact I have written a number of disjointed lines. Every day I lock myself in and compose for an hour or two; but if this plan proves of no effect, Gordon must be left unsung. Haply I shall yet strike upon a new vein of inspiration, yet it galls me to write in that metre. But this will make you happier. '*Orestes*', I can safely say, is making way here. None who have seen it, have failed to give it that homage of admiration which is its due. I don't see how people *could* refuse to like it, except from stupidity; it is so obviously grand. James however seems almost to prefer the Sunrise poem at the end of the book. I also lent him a volume of Matthew Arnold's poems, and, like everyone, he has fallen deep in love with them.

It is bitter cold now, with a north-east wind blowing that searches into one's marrow. I have visited no one hardly outside Christ Church, but I am fast making more acquaintances. Young Cotton, who is at Jesus, has invited me to lunch tomorrow, having heard of me from his uncle. I *do* hope he is literary. I want above all things to make lasting friends here; I shall never have such a chance again. There is absolutely no news whatever to give you. Oxford has not yet shaken off its vacation somnolence. I have seen Crawley, who wishes you to write to him. He is just as absurdly Bohnic as ever: Bohn is his god, his oracle; even his rooms have some subtle power of inspiring you with Bohn madness.

I forgot to tell you, that I am busy about an essay, in which my aim is to dispossess English people of the prevalent estimate of Indian character (first proclaimed by Macaulay), and which tries to explain for that estimate in an original way. My theory comes to this simply

EARLY POEMS

that the two races are so different in their thoughts and circumstances that they do not understand each other. When it is finished, I will ask you, if my prose is not improved. I think, after some practise in the holidays, it has more restraint and is simpler and more Attic. I also read several novels in the holidays, as you know—some of the best. I, now wish to read one or two famous bad ones, so as to know better what to avoid, in my own writing.

I send back 'Diversions of the Echo Club', which I stupidly did not return : I hope no one has wanted it. It is full of sound suggestive criticism, which is the best part of it. Would you like Rossetti ? It takes no trouble to bind it up in the same packet. Please write soon ; it is ages since I saw or heard from you.

I should thank you for introducing me to your people in London. They are quite different from all others, I have known there, and most of all I was extremely pleased to know your aunt. She is intellectual ; indeed I don't think you could meet such as her more than once in your life ; she is so gracious too and kind (like yourself and all your family).

Yours ever,
Manmohan Ghose.

Christ Church,
Feb. 10, 1888

My dear Binyon,

Excuse me for leaving so long unanswered your last letter. I have taken to hard work and regular hours of late, and don't get much time to write and still less to write about, except things strictly "*ιδία*". A few things have happened which may interest you.

I have come to know at last a man, who takes a genuine interest in literature. This is Mr. James, a sort of Vice-Don at the House, and brother of the James you know about. It was a pleasant surprise. He is a wide reader with wide appreciations, worships Shelley and knows Walt Whitman, writes verses himself, and is both a good scholar and a man with ideas. He took a 'First' both in 'Mods' and 'Greats'. He lent me at my request some of his verses to read, which I really think have sometimes a touch of poetry in them, but are very bad, reckless in fact, as regards expression. Strange to say, he did not much care for 'Orestes' which of course I made him read, but he

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was quite ravished with some of your poems, and already thinks highly of you—for which I can't be responsible. He is indeed an extremely nice man, and if we could but discover two or three more like him we shall almost be able to fulfil my pet idea, the setting up here of a small fraternity of letters when you come. He wishes very much to know you—so that if ever some Saturday you feel inclined to come up, I will have him to tea with you in my rooms.

So you are hard at work, I see, as usual. You will be pleased to hear I am following your example. I work hard now in one way or another pretty well all day. I am speeding thro' the "Agamemnon". It is a Titanic play, and leaves on one's mind a greater sense of power and sublime conception than any other Greek drama I have read—and this, in spite of all the Aeschylean faults of style, which abound everywhere. There is a magnificent *rush* about the lines. Immediately after finishing it, I mean to read Oedipus Tyrannus, Sophocles' masterpiece, and compare the two. After all, the Greeks are our masters, and in an especial sense. As *models* they surely are and always will be, everything. I can't help admiring the way in which everything is sacrificed to chiselled simplicity of form and cold severity of idea.

You seem much disappointed about my Newdigate. It is like yourself and very good of you to be so concerned about me. I am sorry, truly sorry, I can't thus gratify your kindness and at the same time advance my own interests. I am fully aware that success would give me a fame here in Oxford, and that this is desirable, but somehow I find it impossible to write or bring myself to begin.

You must really excuse me, and I will try to write a poem or two to send you instead, if this peace-offering will satisfy you. If you but knew my present state of mind, you would understand my loathness to attempt the Newdigate. I never felt so hopeless in my life to produce anything good, and never so obstinate. I set apart a few hours every day, in which to think and compose, but nothing I do satisfies me. I suppose it is the effect of a sudden expansion of my critical powers. Have you ever felt like this? Tell me if you have; it will encourage me to know some one has gone thro' the same experience. The only remedy I can think of is hard work; for I now begin to think that the best things done in the world have been the result of severe mental culture: and spurred by this I have become

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a hard and rapid reader. I propose, too, to drop verse for awhile, and write plenty of good stern prose. This will be an outlet for all the ideas thronging in me, and I hope my style will be all the purer and fresher for it afterwards. But I give you too much of my morbid self.

I saw Trewby the other day. He was very pleasant. We talked about your cousin, for whom he seems to have a real regard. He asked after him most affectionately, how he was getting on in art etc. He recited me a poem of Tennyson, accompanied with a solemn gesture of the hand, and his eyes bright with enthusiasm : at that moment he looked sublime enough to seem ridiculous to all the vulgar unpoetic !! His grave manners are rather pleasing than otherwise, and his pronunciation is very clear, much better than mine. He is altogether a very nice man and I must get to know him better.

Do you really purpose sending me the play, and the whole of it ? I am eager to have it and expect it daily. Let me see what will come of my prophecy that you would succeed in your dramatic attempts. Don't be afraid I shall inflict on you the maudlin praise, which used so to disgust you. That is all changed. I have become severe and critical, and have formed rules of criticism by which I go. I shall first tell you what I *don't* like, and then after search in my own mind, why I don't like it ; and perhaps make a suggestion if it be a small point—then it will be enough to say briefly what I like, and perhaps why I like it. Lastly I shall give you the impression it made on me, as a whole.

I am sorry I can't send you any M.S. in return. Anything I write now suffers too much from my own criticism to bear being subjected to yours.

I exist on bread and butter (except at Hall) and spend my patrimony in buying books—which are rapidly filling my shelves now. There are also some small improvements I have made in the appearance of my room. I should be most happy to combine with you in writing a romance, whenever you like. It is a good idea. You ask me for an abstract of my tale. The tale is developing into a novel, the romance you suggested which was to be a "*Magnum opus*". There is so much materials to be got up before attempting such a thing, that I could not possibly write even a short tale before learning a language and a half-alien world of ideas. So I have made up my mind what I shall do with it. The ideas too that I have will make excellent material

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for such a romance; and the plot etc. will grow up round them with time. I am loth to tell you the subject before I have written a word of it. I want to astonish and please you. It is a somewhat ghastly tale of baffled revenge, linked in with smaller episodes. It is perfectly original in idea, and I may safely say no more romantic situation could be conceivable to me.

I should be very glad to send anything for your brother's magazine. As for poetry, he would find much better nearer home; but if he wishes I can send him some lines. The other request, about the article on India, I should most willingly gratify. It is one of my great aims to inform and persuade people on that subject, and I should reproach myself if I neglected this occasion. I shall write a small article for you, not of dry fact—which will interest few—tho' I am quite competent for this, having burrowed like the veriest mole of science into the blind regions of lifeless fact—but I shall strive to put the whole position as clearly, simply, and temperately as possible.

I sympathise with your epigram on Dale: you are imprisoned in the company of a most horrible monster. If poetry had left the earth, Dale would climb to the highest heaven and drag it in triumph down into the abysses of Hades. But this hyperbole is not nearly so effective as your simple expression "Stygian eyes"—what a horrible phrase! I had forgotten the monster: but this expression brought him vividly back to me.

Yours ever,
Manmohan Ghose

Saturday

I got your letter last night. It is all my fault that you have not heard from me; I have been working hard, but that is a poor excuse for not answering your beautiful long letter. I did wrong and you must pardon me.

That was a most interesting affair you tell me of,—the Greek service in honour of Byron. I had not heard of it, as I seldom see the papers here.

I am glad you have finished your play and your poem as well. O that I were blest with half your activity! I am sorry to say my tales are not getting on very rapidly. I have taken to reading more, and writing less of late. I have been smitten with penitence and horror at the amazing amount of time I have lost in indolence and



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dreamy meditation. You would not recognize now the idle creature you knew. I work, read or write all day, except the small time I am walking or in society.

Christ Church
Feb. 18th, 1888

My dear Binyon,

I was deeply interested in your last, especially in the confessions you confided to me. I am rejoiced to see that you have passed thro' the same ordeal which I am now under. I breathe freer, and dare to hope again. I can now with double assurance pursue the new bent my mind has taken.

Before I answer some of those solemn questions you have put to me, will you listen to a counter-confession on my part? It has all been caused by the breaking up of the old ways of feeling and thinking, and the entrance of a new light and life streaming in upon me. I am going to attempt the hard task of disburdening to you some of my most inmost experiences. I seem to be able to trace, throughout my life up to the present moment two distinct tendencies, the developing of each of which divide it into two parts. I can think of no better ways of describing these than by the Goethean terms, in a somewhat forced sense, of 'periods of expansion and concentration'. All childhood and boyhood is expansive. This human ivy stretches passionately forth its young tendrils, and the warm feelings are at the forefront, yearning to bestow and to be reciprocated: it is all heart; its brain lies undeveloped. It is the wise forethought of Nature that this should be so; but, in my case, Fate came between and cancelled her decrees; and, what to others is the bright portion of their life, its heaven and refuge was for me bitterly and hopelessly blighted. You will not understand me, unless I tell you a circumstance of my life which is unhappily both painful for me to reveal, and for you to hear. I had no mother. She is insane. You may judge the horror of this, how I strove to snatch a fearful love, but only succeeded in hating and loathing, and at last becoming cold. Crying for bread I was given a stone. My father was kind but stern, and I never saw much of him. Thus from childhood I was subject to fits of gloom and despondence which grew with my age. I don't wish to dwell on this, and you need not pity me. I have quite outgrown that dead

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past, and look upon it without the least regret : indeed I should have forgotten it, but that the incidents are of an unforgettable nature. I only relate this, because I can't otherwise explain the peculiar melancholy which now partly composes my character. Also I believe, there is something repulsive about me. Nobody ever took a liking to me. You are the only one who ever appreciated me. As a boy I often perceived with jealousy that my brothers were always preferred to me. (Don't think me morbid, for I say this half in wonder, without an atom of self-pity).

There was ever a restless hunger at my heart, and to satisfy it, my imagination went to work. Strange to say it was not in poetry, tho' the very first thing I read,—an Englished version of Chevy Chase, when quite young in India—shook me with a storm of delight. My imagination was exercised in romancising, that is picturing all manner of ideal and affecting incidents, in which I was the central actor and persons around me minor ones, who gratified my unfulfilled desires. Thus life with me rolled on two hinges of interest—the creations of my own dreams and the transitory passion that filled me for different persons at different times. Every now and then a dormant element stirred within me, the desire to write. This resulted in expanding mere hints from your words and personality. This I might call the accumulative period. But, as I said, the emotional part of me was the same : it remained unchanged. During this time was written all the verse you have seen of mine—which, tho' the chords may differ with hope and despair, has but the single theme of love. You will perhaps be at a loss to know what I am driving at by all this, I'm afraid. Without this preamble of the past, I could not well explain what I now am and think.

Recently I have undergone a complete transformation. I was strangely conscious of the flowing in of unknown sources of strength and forces of change and upheaval. I had long been dissatisfied with myself and questioned everything within and around me, and now all at once there awoke in me seething energies of mind, which drove me to strive and allay its flames in the rivers of knowledge. I am intensely in earnest. I dreamt myself a man, but find with bitter truth that I am a child. I will thirst now to know, until I am satisfied. In my folly I preferred my own idle dreams to the grave truth and reason of others ; becoming wise, I see that a drop of theirs

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is equal to seas of mine. There is another feature too about my conversion—it is the main point. I seemed all at once to fall back on myself; to concentrate all my powers within myself; my feelings were stifled and prostrate, and my heart was hardened: I felt strong and free, as tho' I could tread mercilessly over the heads of men. Henceforth I seek no more the sympathy of others. The blind was lifted, and suddenly I saw myself, saw that I am and must perforce be alone, eternally alone. I seemed like an Alpine villager, who hears the thunder of the descending avalanche dooming his home to annihilation, and flying wildly, climbs up to some desolate height, whence he might look back on that suddenly vanished past with much the same feelings as I. It was a book of Indian philosophy which helped to startle me with its reiterated maxim—'Alone hast thou come into the world and thou shalt go out of it alone.' And is it not right? How do we know that we shall meet again hereafter? What, alas, is love? and who knows what he loves? If absence can efface, as tho' it had never been, the most deeply adored object, shall not death do it? I at any rate will seek it no more, but if there be any offer of it from another, I am not sure that the inborn passion of my nature will not undermine the strongest fort of intellect I can build for myself. But I ask now for calm, for a self-centred collected soul, for patient powers of thought and expression. I ask for solitude to make me strong, to give me leisure to think, and satisfy the burning intensity with which I have begun to read and reflect. I sympathize, deeply sympathize with the sufferings, hopes, and happinesses of all humanity and of individual humanity. But never more shall I stand like a hungry beggar, praying each passer-by for what he can give. I will stand sole and strong upon myself, as on a rock: the famine of the brain after Truth and thirst of the creative energies shall be my bread and drink, an immortal source of sustainment and self-evolved power. The sudden expansion of intellect has not subdued but sobered with the shock and cleared the air of my imagination. Indeed I am ready to acknowledge that what I dreamt was imagination, was merely a phantom-producing fancy. That is why I now prefer the ideas of other men: they are rational, mine were not. Imagination works thro' the inexorable laws of reason, dwells in a world of creation and therefore of order and limitation not in the formless vast of chaos. Fancy is a blinded bird fluttering about

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in its own darkness, imagination a soaring eagle, whose eyes are more piercing than and therefore can never be blinded by the piercing glare of revealment which reason sheds upon the world. Fancy is to imagination what dreams are to reality. At present then I am resolved to read and reflect more and produce less—as I read about the ancient Indian philosophers the spirit of my ancestors is upon me. Driven by a famished intellect they fled into the desert to live as eremites and ascetics, and ponder alone on the eternal and the true. O that I could thus abstract myself wholly from the soulless taskwork and jarring common-places of modern life—and give myself up with unremitting devotion to thought and productive toil. And I am determined on this point. I have powerful allies. I am glad I am alone in England; the pettier ties have long ago relaxed by the oblivious washings of a sundering sea, and now leave me to the deeper ones of country and humanity. I condescend to call that means by which I can discover the thoughts and hearts of men around me by the name of society, tho' I know I am in deepest isolation. You are the only company to me, and I can commune with you alone. I triumph in the thought of this. The only doubt and dread that crosses my mind is that I may suffer some strange resurrection of the passion I have smothered to death. It is intolerable to think that I must bear the yoke of another soul—for those that truly love, love so—give themselves wholly up to the adored object. Love or the want of it has wounded me: it is a tyrant and I am rebellious for ever. I wish to be an ascetic and think to eternity.

I can now with relief close this revelation of some of my inmost thoughts and fold down the page for ever. They so worked within me that I had to reveal them to somebody, and that somebody could only be you. So you must pardon this piece of necessary selfishness; and now to the more congenial task of answering your questions.

Your state of mind has deeply interested me. So you have become a doubter,—a doubter, is it not, in Christianity and the dogmas of Christianity. I must confess I am not even that. In this upheaval of the mind all my beliefs and doubts have sunk and perished and left me in blank agnosticism. I only know that I know nothing, and that as a child begins to live, so I must begin to think with my new-born reason. Explain anything to me in consonance with my

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reason, and I will welcome it and believe it truth ; explain it obscurely or leave it an unexplained statement and I *must* doubt. Men may prate of revelation : they know not what they say : reason is the only revelation, and so also, no doubt, are the intuitions of the imagination, if corroborated by reason. I feel that we walk thro' the universe peering with a dim lantern into illimitable darkness ; that is our sole guide. I hold it impious to be irrational. "Reason", Spinoza says, "is the revelation of God".

I heartily accept your challenge. Let us have a battle about the immortality of the soul. I will take the orthodox side, if you like ; terrible work it will be to make the irrationalities of that party appear rational. But difficulties now only nerve me on ; I will overcome them. The discussion will do us both immense good. I already anticipate the stormy delight of combat. It is also my opinion that dialectic is the quickest and best way of combating and proving and getting at the truth. So in your next letter please give me your train of objections and I will try and overthrow them successively, tho' of course as I am not used to the weapons of defence, especially of constructive defence, I shall not be surprised at my defeat. Especially am I eager to know the theory you mention. The better perhaps if it be a paradox. Perhaps Truth after all is a perfect globe, with answering poles on every spot of its surface.

I have just received your play and "Diversions of the Echo Club". I thank your aunt very much for the latter. Of course you understand I sent it back unintentionally, before you told me I could keep it. As for the play I am all on fire to read it, tho' I feel I must write and send this letter off at once. You shall hear my criticisms in my next.

I forgot to ask you, in our discussion are you willing to presuppose the existence of God ? This will clear my way greatly. I must close now.

Yours ever,
Manmohan Ghose

James wishes very much to know you.—Next term would of course be much nicer to come up. It has been snowing here for days

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somewhat intermittently ; and March I expect will be just as bad at Oxford.

You will be able to see your friends here and go about much more pleasantly in the Summer. I hope I am not going to fail in Responsions this time. It is only three weeks distant. If I do pass it will be by good luck. Somehow I can't count and I disdain to ; the god Arithmos did not rule my natal star and has not gifted me with that useful accomplishment which fate decrees I must try to learn. You say that you were disgusted and disheartened on looking over and perceiving the poorness of all you have written in comparison with the works of the great poets. It may be so, but your verse does not strike me at all in that light. I only know I shall never write as good. If you despair, I must never hope.

Feb. 27, 1888

My Dear Binyon,

I was very pleased to get your letter, and you may imagine my joy to see that you have understood all I let flow to relieve my heart with, and deeper still is my joy to feel that we have the same bond of experience, and are entitled to be as intimate as we please. But, as you say, we will let all this rest, and talk no more about it. Thanks very much for your play. I have read it carefully several times. It is really admirable ; and if you asked my judgement, I should readily pronounce it a success. I have not been able to find anybody, who could criticize it dramatically and tell its acting capabilities. But if you wish to know how it strikes an ordinary untechnical person, I sincerely think it possesses high dramatic power. This lies mainly in the original conception and successful handling of Brunone. There is an intense and tragic atmosphere pervading the whole piece, which is given to it by this unique figure. Brunone, I think, must have been the first character conceived in your mind ; for the deep sadness, which is peculiarly his, seems to breathe also thro' the words of every other person in the play. You have taken the most pains over him, and made him a deep and complex character, while the others are in comparison faintly tho' agreeably, sketched. It is here I admire your skill. He is a centre round whom the rest revolve, and this method gives a surprising unity and wholeness to

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so short and slight a structure. If you had given a rival importance in centrality to any other in the play, it would certainly have lost in unity. The reason why Brunone is complex and takes such fast hold on our interest is because an intense and sad despair mingles with and redeems the terrible persistency of his revenge, and so turns our horror into pity that the pathetic out-weighs the dreadful, and produces a moral ambiguity in his vengeance. He is bad and he is good, but above all we are forced to feel that he is unfortunate ; and when that direful destiny, which has brought him into the world and hurries him on to accomplish its own will, suddenly turns round and makes him the victim of his revenge, our pity is doubled. Costro, the shallow and passionate lover, is so prominent, because he is involved in the same destiny with Brunone, and by his death, like Brunone satisfies the shades of old guilt who can only be laid to rest by blood however innocent : and also because you have lavished so much poetry and pathos on his death-scene. Gherardo's passion is deep and true and occasions the purest poetry : in the garden-scene and that in which he confesses his passion to Beatrice. Beatrice, we can see, is sweet and saintlike, tho' she is so faintly sketched : we feel her character more from her influence on others, than from her words. And one of the most touching and poetic scenes is that in which she crosses the murderous path of Brunone and causes one of his many fits of reluctance ; where she acts so sweetly, and he with such intense sadness and despondency. The whole play has the freshness of a water-colour painting, bright and poetic, to which the acid revenge of Brunone gives a keenness of edge such as I have met elsewhere only in satire. It is a success because indubitably it has high and poetic subject matter, treated in my judgement in a full and adequate way ; and I will call it great because it has successfully solved a great moral problem : for this last feat gives it at once a serious value which no amount of romance could possibly do. The moral problem lies in the fate and character of Brunone ; we feel that here pity for sin is the *highest* justice ; the pity I mean for sin caused by miseries *forced* upon humanity : yet the *lower* justice of nature is satisfied by the inevitable punishment that dogs crime like a shadow. This is badly expressed, but I hope you will see what I mean. I am not alone in appreciating the merits of your play—I read it to James, who remarked that it was difficult to believe you were younger than I : he confessed

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himself struck with the power of expression and the faculty of dramatic utterance which you showed. Macpherson also has heard it, and he liked it very much : he said he never thought it would be so good ; the tragic beauty of the whole, and the high poetry of the last scene pleased him best. Macpherson has a juster perception of what true poetry is than any one else I have met here ; his is a simple and natural appreciation. James is unfortunately somewhat clogged with the *ηθος* and ideas of Aristotle as regards poetry, and altogether more learned, tho' it would probably be untrue and certainly uncharitable to say that his appreciation is not also based upon the elemental unconscious gravitation of a poetical mind towards the essence of poetry. But it is curious that both James and Macpherson failed to see Brunone's character in its true light, that is to say if my conception of him is the right one. They declared him utterly immoral and his revenge repulsive and horrible. Somehow I cannot think this. What was your conception of him ? As for the pure poetry of individual lines, it is scattered every where throughout the play and too universal for quotation. I was especially pleased with this line—

O no, there are not two such under heaven !

It is the more prosaic parts with which I was least satisfied. You do not seem at home here. You give, I think, rather an unmeaning tho' possibly suggestive significance to utterances of speakers there. But what is the use of suggestiveness for instance in such a featureless character as Ricordo ; The more subordinary and ordinary you make him, the better. Nicholas' remarks about the purse he picks up have the same fault. But it is obvious you did not feel yourself at home in these trifling things. I ought not to cavil, for the first scene is most delicately and nicely written, considering that it has not and ought not to have any deeply absorbing subject-matter. It would certainly be a mistake to make such a play as this all poetry. I think I should have written these prosaic parts consistently in vigorous pointed prose, rising with any note of passion or poetry that interrupts it, into verse. But you have Shakespeare for a precedent : he seldom (except in humorous scenes) drops into prose and only when people of inferior rank are speaking. But all this may be hypercriticism resulting from want of clearer sympathy. Still as an experiment I should like to see how a play rigidly built on

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this principle would answer. The great thing would be to make the prose brilliant with an interest and merit of its own.

You must be heartily tired of this long-winded criticism ; so I will stop.

You ask me to tell you something about Oxford. Nothing new has happened ; but as my mind has become more observant of late, and looks with eyes of healthier interest upon things and persons around me, I will tell you some things that strike me. On the whole I must confess I am a little disappointed with Oxford. There is a deplorable lack of unity in undergraduate life, as I have seen it. I have sought everywhere for some united sphere where I could effect a standing, and thence make my influence felt. But there is nothing of this kind : all is a sea of separate, if not of warring waves each wandering on whither it wills. Even such centres as exist, I am inclined to think are in a languid state without much real earnestness. The "Union" for instance—everyone knows it is not what it used to be. So much for the political centre—and 'politics' and athletics are the two things which seem to have most interest for English youth. There are many amateur musicians among us, and so we fortunately have a 'Musical Union' which owes its vigorous condition more to the necessary enthusiasm of those interested in music than to the energy of Oxford men. Art has not the barest representation : indeed it would grieve the soul of an artist to see in this place of culture the stupid want of taste which mocks us from the walls of Oxford rooms. As for Literature, we have no centre for it whatever : it is my hope—or fond delusion, perhaps,—that we may be able in the future to create one, or at least the germs of one. For from the necessity of its nature, Literature must surely be most capable of being widely understood as it is nearest of all to the ordinary classical culture. But the amateurs in it are few, very few ; tho' there are many learned and clever classical men who write for the Newdigate, and have a fragmentary interest in a few authors. The sole success of all attempts at union is in Athletics. I have no grudge against athletics. Indeed nothing pleases me more than to see these fine-limbed sinewy young-men possessing all those splendid capacities for action which Nature has in part refused to me. Let them by all means follow their own bent : it is natural and right that each should do that which gives

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him the truest enjoyment, for in so doing we obey the will of Nature. But it grieves me to see such fine physical endowments and activities lacking what would so enhance their pleasure and value—a little more of reflective and appreciative powers. The *Summum bonum* of hundreds here is athletics. This disappoints me and makes me dissatisfied. It serves me right, I hear you say, for being too-ideal. Well, there is even melancholy satisfaction in being ideally dissatisfied. I am engaged in self-culture, and like all earnest people, I wish to be helpful also to others in showing them the path to fields of pleasure which I have enjoyed so much: But I want a centre from which and a sphere in which to act. This I have not. I am sure however from my own personal experience that what you remarked to me once is perfectly true. There are many Englishmen, who are really quite capable of enlightenment if one could tear off their 'Philistine mask'. A few of my friends at Christ Church are of this kind, with the germs of appreciation latent in them, whom I have forced by my sheer enthusiasm for literature to take a cordial interest in it. Enthusiasm, by the way, does wonders here: it is a mighty mover of hearts fervid with youth and much more potent than reason: there is something so infectious about it.

But I have lingered over this subject quite enough. You wish to know all about this business with Zacharias. Well, tho' it threatened to turn out serious, it has not come to much. The Jew all of a sudden took a whimsical suspicion that I was not going to pay him, and lodged a complaint before the Chancellor's court. I was surprised by an official note from the Proctor of the Chancellor's court, requesting me to pay up, and threatening to bring a summons against me in default of payment on or before Feb. 28th. This unjust movement on the part of Zachariaus put me into such a fit of passion, that I was reckless of what might follow, and declared I would cut my heart out sooner than submit to a vile *bourgeois*. In this dare-devil state of mind I was about to run into endless risks. It is well-known that Bellamy, the present Vice-Chancellor, is a deadly foe of undergraduate debtors, and in that mood of mind heaven knows what rude things I might not have said. But at this juncture the Censor pointed out so clearly to me that I had not the slightest grounds of defence and should—if I lost the case have to pay all the costs of the trial,—that I gave way after some inward fuming. I never felt

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so vexed and angry in my life. I went to the shop on the 28th the last day of grace, but the wily old Hebrew had gone down to London for a week ; his purpose being to make the trial inevitable. I routed out his wife, who behaved in a most vicious and impertinent manner, at first refusing to receive payment. I stormed, and ended by telling her peremptorily to give me the receipt and be damned. This quieted if not frightened her and she obliged.

I deeply regret this incident now, as it betrayed and plucked me down from that stoic severity of soul which I am cultivating together with my habits of secluded thought and reading. I have once again read your play after an interval and on re-reading this letter, find the unfavourable parts of my criticism quite unwarrantable : so you must pardon me for letting them remain. With a fresh perusal, I seem to gain a clearer appreciation of its good qualities. The verse is fine throughout ; it has *style*, and is impenetrated with the peculiar sadness to which I have referred. I should now be the last to wish this poetic air to be lost, as would be too possible in the dead levels of prose. You are always dramatic, tho' an equal height of poetry is not kept up throughout : and it is this dramatic quality I am most struck with, as I have seen much poetic verse of yours before, but none dramatic : it is a new development, of which I have the greatest hopes. With deep interest, believe me, have I read your religious doubts and your theory of immortality : at present they shall remain as nourishment for thoughts. I am compelled however to make this one remark : if this be not Christian in thought and spirit (the doctrine matters not), I cannot conceive what is : indeed you are so Christian, that you seem to think that no other religion's great ideas bear any comparison with the Christian. But we will leave this till hereafter. You suggest writing a dialogue : this is a good idea ; at any rate I could not deliver my opinions clearly *viva-voce*.

Do you really think me incapable of sympathizing with you ? It was that somewhat morbid letter, in which I let flow forth all that lingered of my old self, which must have given you this idea. How can I force on you that I am altered, wholly transformed ? I could not help being moved by one who so appeals to my emotions, as your self ; and I would love you as certainly and unchangeably even if I thought that I must not hope for one tenth of the return I wished.

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I have left my all weakness behind me. I feel strong enough to be heartless to myself, and yet all heart towards you, and whoever else shall move the same feelings as you. I am growing as stern as my father, who is so strangely unsentimental that I am assured he would vivisect me if he thought that my highest good. Therefore never say again I cannot sympathize with you. I thoroughly understand your position. You feel like myself in this matter and envy my isolation, (which I know and value as my greatest good fortune). Your lot is a hard and difficult one indeed from what you say : mine is so smooth and simple in comparison. What a terrible misfortune to feel that you must take a path which will lead you away from all who are most dear to you : Forgive me for this little piece of indignation : but you should not have said I could *hardly understand* you position.

I shall be coming down in a week or two's time, and we shall soon meet. This vacation lasts six weeks. I hope we shall be able to read some classics together, during your holidays,—that is, if you feel inclined.

Yours affectionately,
Manmohon Ghose

P.S. I shall return the "Play" by next Monday or Tuesday.

Christ Church,
April 23, 1888

My dear Binyon,

I have not seen you for such an age that I feel it my duty now to write to you, tho' I'm afraid I have not much to say. I arrived here safe on Friday, and found it steadily drizzling, with everything sweetly damped with weeks of rain, as I heard—that evening being the finest they have had since they could remember. Nor has the weather seemed as yet disposed to become less dolorous, a cold wet wind, with a continually moving leaden sky, and long spells of heavy rain having prevailed since I came back to diggings. Under these circumstances, I felt extremely hypochondriac and had to bury myself in the driest book I could find, which happened to be Demosthenes.

EARLY POEMS

I have seen Hobhouse today who welcomed me back in his own quiet way, before he arranged my work for the term. The first question he put me was, "Did I do any reading in the Vacation?" And when I answered I had done some, he seemed slightly dissatisfied and a cloud came over his face, but presently he smiled and said gravely—"You should have taken a complete rest; for you ought not to work too hard." And truly I think he was in the right, when I remember the Titanic toil with which I worked last term at the Multiplication-table and other arithmetical matter, now alas, almost washed away by the tides of oblivion, as I found to my sorrow this afternoon. For when the bill of expenses up to Lady-day came in, imagine my horror to see written there "Balance to Steward—£29." I pondered over this fearful enigma for at least two hours, and concluded that I should be bankrupt—at the end of that time. However I consoled myself with the reflection that there must be some mystery about the matter, and it will all come right, if I wait long enough. So when I sent the bills to my brother, I wrote him a very mirthful letter and told him not to mind much about it, as the people here could wait until we were ready to pay them. This is always the best way of getting out of such difficulties. But to return to my Tutor—he then proceeded to arrange my work for the term. The only lectures I am to attend are on Tacitus' Annals at Balliol, and one on Demosthenes' 'Private Orations' at Univ.—this surprised and overjoyed me as being very little. My Tutor seemed to guess my thoughts, for he said, "We must make the best of the year that lies before us." He is a delightful man, a Tutor after my own heart, so easy-going and mild-tempered, and full of infinite good-will towards all manner of people—qualities I can truly appreciate. He is exceedingly tall—indeed everything about him is elongated, his face especially which is mournful and heavy. He is silent, dry, and brief, and snubs you unless you are silent, dry and brief—and therefore we agree capitally together; for I never talk much to him since he, like myself, is rather nervous. He expects me to do very little work and to astonish everybody with my brilliant learning—both of which I am very anxious to do, and the easy confidence he thus reposes in me is most charming. The Senor Don is the most affable man in creation, and I always defend him as the best tutor in Christ Church. I must go as soon as possible and pay my respects to the Senora, his wife.



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Do you know Christ Church has done quite as well as Balliol this year in Moderations, each of us getting five "Firsts". The rest of the Colleges have not got quite so many. Mulvany has done brilliantly, getting a 'first' in each of the fourteen subjects he took up. He gives a dinner of rejoicing tonight to which I am invited. I have also seen Trewby, who, poor fellow, got only a 'second,' and is therefore much chagrined. He will probably do better in Greats, as we all tell him ; being of the steady unobtrusive kind of scholar. Crawley is as well and humorous as ever, and complains that you do not write to him. He and I have begun Spanish together, which we mean to learn very ardently, and master, as it is such an easy language. He has grown just half an inch more. I was careful to measure him and see how much of his lost height he had regained.

How are you getting on with Alfred de Musset ? I have been reading a good deal of André Chénier ; also Landor's 'Gebir', which is very fine, as a poem, and a model of strong terse style ; the book gave me great pleasure. As I have nothing much to say, I will subjoin a poem of André Chénier's. He is Greek, but in a different way from Keats ; and yet like Keats he runs on without much symmetry or proportion, most of his poems having the air of fragments. His love-poems are often charming, and his poem on Charlotte Corday is full of splendid abuse. I am growing to be very fond of him, as he is always fresh and natural. This poem might well be put beside Stevenson's on the same subject.

(The letter is unsigned)

EARLY POEMS

' Sur la mort d'un enfant.'

L'innocente victime, au terrestre séjour
 N'a vu que le printemps qui lui donna le jour.
 Rien n'est resta' de lui qu'un nom, un vain nuage,
 Un souvenir, un songe, une invisible image,
 Adieu, fragile enfant, échappé de nos bras;
 Adieu, dans la maison d'où l'on ne revient pas.
 Nous ne te verrons plus, quand de moissons couvert
 La campagne d'été rend la ville déserte;
 Dans l'enclos paternel nous ne te verrons plus,
 De tes pieds, de tes mains, de tes flancs demi-nus;
 Presser l'herbe et les fleurs dont les nymphes de Seine
 Couronnent tous les ans les coteaux de Lucienne.
 L'arc de l'humble char à tes jeux destiné,
 Par de fidèles mains avec toi promené,
 Ne sillonnera plus les prés et le rivage.
 Tes regards, ton murmure, obscur et doux langage,
 N'inquiéteront plus ~~nos~~ ^{nos} soins officieux;
 Nous ne recevrons plus avec de cris joyeux
 Les efforts impuissants de ta bouche vermeille;
 A légender les sons offerts à ton oreille.
 Adieu, dans la demeure où nous nous suivrons tous
 Où ta mère déjà tourne ses yeux jaloux.



LETTERS

Christ Church,
May, 1888.

My dear Binyon,

Thanks for your letter and poem. I'm afraid you'll think my reason for not mentioning Matthew very ridiculous. But to tell the truth I felt it a necessity to employ euphemism, the news moved me so. I was filled with consternation, and had to plunge into strong outward action to relieve my mind and restore it to equilibrium. In consequence I don't think I have ever before been to so many theatres as those few days before I came up. I was so powerfully affected, I thought I should go mad. So you must not think it unfeeling that I did not mention it. You must have noticed my wild attempts to assume gaiety. I like your lines; they are very true of him as a poet of Nature—and I hope you'll succeed in getting it accepted. Also I shall be interested in the essay. But I don't want to talk any more of this now.

I have much to tell you about my romance, more indeed than I could compress into this letter.—I am pretty free in telling my plan to my friends here, (who are all much pleased with the project), and the more so, because I wish to get an idea what are really people's opinions about novels and romances. Macpherson has riper views, or at least more congenial with mine, than any of them: Celtic as he is he has a preference for all that is weird, wild, and tragic, and artistic merits, which he appreciates to a certain extent, do not strike him uncombined with these. He was disappointed that the story did not end an unmingled tragedy. But really the main incident of the tale is so dreary and dreadful, that it is a mercy bestowed on the author's feelings to suffer him to vary and relieve this tenebrous atmosphere by lesser incidents of a more cheerful air—indeed my artistic sense demands it. A humorous character or two, if I can manage would do it. But this is a shame, I am giving you hints without meaning to tell you my story. You won't think me unkind, I hope; it is you whom I am most concerned about pleasing the best—and, as I said I shall keep my idea in reserve as a surprise and a completer pleasure. Still I must tell you how I begin.

When I first tried to commence, I was brought face to face with a real obstruction. I found the pictures that grew up in my mind

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assume a fantastic and intangible appearance dispiriting to me ; I rubbed these out in disgust ; and ere I set to seek a substitute, I discovered quite naturally a remedy for my difficulty. For when I let imagination go idle and play, after its hard taskings, it at once attached itself to old shapes of memory, haunting scenes and incidents of childhood, and forgotten faces of joy and terror flitted in review before me. The more I pondered, I acknowledged a strong touch of realism inherent in me ; here certainly it has done me signal service. All my poems are the expression, now I come to regard them under this fresh light, of strong emotional phases due directly to *outward causes*—feelings I myself did at the time of composition vividly experience. I am inclined to doubt whether I should feel quite at home in a world wholly of my own making. If I made the attempt, I should inevitably add a homely touch with an impulse of prosaic experience. Just so I find in my romance, that however much I may originate, even this arranges itself and takes its colour from the materials of memory. The whole of the first two or three chapters is to be a reminiscence of those brimming boyish days, lighted up with the glamour of that enchanting and endearing dream-view—memory.

There was one Indian sight which left a vivid impression of interest on my mind—I mean those noble stone palaces, with gray balconies, stately pillared courts, and their breezy and murmurous environment of wood and water : which naturally enough comes up unsummoned as the centre of the picture. Not far from my father's house there was one of these Rajah's palaces, which I often observed with interest and wonder. This I cunningly introduce : it is a massive mysterious pile, mouldering outwardly, and there is a great secret about the place. Tho' it is known to be inhabited no one is ever seen entering or coming out of it ; and besides it is branded black with ugly tradition. No viler race, perhaps, has existed than those Rajahs. Our Indian nurse is never tired of telling us wild dreary stories of them, histories polluted with the most heart-freezing and unnatural horrors, with the endless stiletto and poison gleaming out and revelling among them. My childish curiosity is stirred, and I am determined on private exploration, and see certain marvellous things, which for the present I leave to your fancy. I will only add that the history of the inhabitants of this place is the main subject of the romance ; and this is how I approach it. These people have been brought

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down to shame and poverty by an English gentleman to whom their estates have fallen a prey. Here the revenge comes in—and I think I have said enough.

I saw the elder James last Sunday ; he has just returned from a holiday in Greece, and I had from him a full and interesting account of his travels. During the conversation there came up the project of a colony of intellectual men : the Greek or Italian coast would be a poet's paradise. I was inflamed with the description I heard of them : I am certain I could write nothing but verse, did I live there. I told him too the project of my romance, which he approved, thinking the theme I had chosen offered wide scope.

I am glad to see you so actively occupied. Of course you will send me John Averil in its new shape as soon as it is done, and don't change it too much, for it is really very fine. I ought to have mentioned 'Joan of Arc' before. To tell the truth, I could not do justice to what may have been in it as most of it escaped me. This is always the way. A recitation or lecture never gives me the whole of itself. I pause over a striking line or thought, and lose by a wide gap what succeeds. I must read the poem sometime.

My circle of acquaintance is still a widening one. There are two men I have come to know who have especially pleased me—both at Christ Church. One of them named Addleshaw, who writes verse, is a wide and ardent reader of poetry and prose, indeed quite as, if not more, literary than James, and apart from these facts struck me as really unique. His personal appearance—and it is from this I first judge a man—ought not to delude me. A massive brow and chin, and the real life and flow which you immediately notice in his conversation—ought to intimate something out of the common. I was half surprised and much charmed to find that he wrote really good verse, bold, simple and vigorous. I should say Byron was his model. The verse in question is a tragedy, entitled 'A Mortal God'. The lines are seldom pretty, but strong and free from superfluous epithets—indeed the best basis of style—and what is more there is real creation and individual atmosphere about the piece. However I may be praising it too much, I shall send it on to you and ask your opinion.

The other man, named Dearmer, is very great on art and also on literature, and simply mad on Rossetti, both as painter and poet.

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Last night at the "Twenty Club", Dearmer read a paper on Rossetti, and I was present as a visitor. Of course it was all eulogy, but showed how well he knew his subject. Addleshaw opposed : he loathes Rossetti, vituperated him as effeminate, and moon-shine, having written nothing good but the "King's Tragedy" which is dramatic in parts—and I know not how much more—all apparently merely to spite Dearmer—tho' those two are the best of friends. Dearmer had praised Rossetti for his colour, picturesqueness, mystical thought, spirituality, etc. This conflict amused me very much. Being asked to speak I gave them some of my own humble opinions. Burrows also who is of our circle spoke, and very well too, uttering some sound criticisms. The whole thing was very interesting. Dearmer, I must tell you, has one of the most kindly and attractive faces I have met. Please excuse my not having answered your letter before.

Yours

M.G.

Christ Church,
May, 1888.

My dear Binyon,

Many thanks for your letter and particularly 'John Averil', which absolutely charmed me. For the few faults it may contain the abundant 'cry' and vigour of it are a full atonement. Perhaps the highest praise I could give would be to admit it to be at last *dramatic*. Passionate despair for his false sweet-heart—that new element which you have wrought into the piece, makes the man more vividly human than we could ever imagine him through his socialism alone. A passion, which appeals to every one, leads the way to explain and makes natural one that would strike much fewer sympathies. Indeed I believe that without it you would have been obliged to dwell on the sufferings of the poor more definitely than you did in the vague rough draft of the poem. But that would have been a far harder task. This is infinitely better.

I'll not venture to state positively that all vagueness has been done away with, even yet. I showed it to several people, as indeed

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you advised me, without telling them much about the origin of the poem. I found that only two, both of a democratic temper, could really enter into it. What can you expect from people who shudder as tho' from instinct at the name of 'socialist' and believe that it hoards all the foulest meanings in the language? They roll above as in a sphere that absolutely disdains any conception of the divine passions and crimes of the multitude. No wonder then that your stanzas were strange to them, and when I explained the sense, were plainly unpalatable. But they could not help admiring the vigour and the beauty—where there was no savour of politics. Addleshaw is a thorough Radical, I believe, and was pleased with the thing; besides its stirring character would appeal to one of his stamp. But he would give no criticism, and James who seems to understand it better than any other, has not yet returned me the poem and his verdict. He alone guessed the meaning of "Children of Necessity"—which seems to me the clue to the whole.

What a sweet change in the weather! Oxford seems quite transformed and enchanted under it. The gardens look very pretty of course, and the rivers that intersect the town swim slower now and dream under a paradise of trees. And what a homely smell and air about the little country hamlets laid in bosoming hollows or on gracious undulations, the charming old-world cottages, the open-mouthed pretty rustic children, playing barefooted about them. I often take my walks through lanes besnowed on either hand with hawthorn hedges, with a Congreve or Bunyan in my hand, diligently studying these old prose-writers. My pains in trying to form a good prose style are simply unstinted. I feel nothing more strongly than the necessity for an oblivion of all contemporaries, and a cast-back to older and fresher models. Merely to see their surpassing excellences shows me the ill-knit diffuseness and badness of my own prose; their simplicity rebukes me; their ease and vigour stings me to emulate some shadow of their merits. I can't rest till I have driven into my memory a multitude of bold and simple phrases, varied turns of expression, and words used in fine uncommon senses—at the same time shunning too patent archaisms. This is the only way to form a style. Have you ever read any of Congreve's comedies? The grace of his exquisite sparkling prose is inimitable. I read him for style—for the matter is indifferent: the extreme gaiety, 'tis true, of society

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in his time is a fit and charming atmosphere for comedy, but its utter heartlessness is so transparent. Bunyan is too quaint and old to be much imitated, yet his simplicity and roughness are bracing. You encourage and please me much by your high expectations of my romance. I only hope it may satisfy them. My head is so teeming with ideas, that it is impossible to give you a clear account of the plan, which I suppose I shall have to do soon. I'll let you see a chapter or two when I finish them. At present I have not written much—as I am taking infinite pains over the style. It does not begin with very startling action, and is written rather in an autobiographical and reflective manner—but the matter is perfectly original and soon touched with a strong romantic interest, that should carry the reader along until he comes to incidents of swifter action.

I'm glad you liked the 'Mortal God'. You made one remark of great penetration, that it was hastily done. Addleshaw told me before I read it, that he was afraid it was not so good owing to his method of writing. It seems he sat up all night and had it finished by the morning. I don't believe he has a particle of *pure* criticism in him—he only *feels* what is good. Nor does he seem to have corrected it at all—which I told him was a heinous omission. He intends to write another dramatic piece in the 'Long'—the conception of which, tho' he didn't state it very clearly, struck me as being rather fine.

I fear I shall not be able to write to you at such length as I should like owing to the world of work I must get thro' somehow before the beginning of the 'Long' so as to pass creditably in an Examination, called 'Collections' which we have at the end of the term—on our year's work.

Yours,
M. Ghose.



LETTERS

Christ Church,
June, 2, 1888

My dear Binyon,

Please excuse remissness in answering your letter with the poem, for which many thanks. It is distinctly pretty and most musical. On what did you model the metre? Was it, "When the hounds of Spring are on Winter's traces?" For it sounds Swinburnian. You don't often indulge in such hyperboles as finish the first stanza—and very pretty they are too. I fear I have some news that will displease you. The article on India which I promised so confidently to send this week remains unfinished. I have been startled out of that and other projects by the approach of 'Collections', which as it is a formal examination I must shuffle through somehow. Matters are made worse by a grant of £25 which Ch. Ch. has been so liberal as to give me of late: which embarrasses me with a fear of being thought ungrateful should I fail to pass creditably. As it is, I am sure I shall not do that. My two first terms with their repletion of Arithmetic have put me in irretrievable arrears in my classical work, and now I am a defaulting debtor to your brother. I beg a thousand pardons. Would you please be so kind as to explain my case to him. I could without much difficulty just hurriedly jot down my thoughts on the paper, and send it to him—but this would be quite unsatisfactory, I am sure. Could he let me delay it till the next number? I should then turn out something really good, and make the essay thoroughly artistic and telling. Please put the case to him as smoothly as possible and don't mind telling some little fibs on my behalf; or else I fear I shall sadly sink in his estimation.

I come down, I believe, about the 20th or perhaps a little before. Possibly, if I have some money, I shall go to the seaside for a fortnight straight away from Oxford; but this is unlikely. I should like to do so because I can't compose or work any longer at the Club. I have got sick of lodging there and want to move off somewhere else. We are going to take a flat in some romantic corner of Kensington, where there is plenty of likelihood of meeting with adventures. But we shall not be able to do this till after the holidays. Most of the congenial spirits have gone from the Club, and our democratic violence is growing distasteful to the small aristocratic circle who

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rule the place. We laid a plot to overthrow them a little while ago, and I don't know to what lengths we shall not proceed if we stay any longer. I propose forming a 'society of assassins' but my brother thinks this too violent a measure. My brother is probably going to Galway for his holidays on the invitation of a friend we have made in the Club.

I was much interested in your criticisms on 'Gebir'. Your charge of obscurity is true, but I think it is inherent in Landor's style—the effect of a strained and excessive terseness to which the reader must become habituated before it opens to him all its beauties. That is the reason why so few people read Landor's poetry. I have tried everywhere to get a cheap collection of Landor's poetical works but without success. I don't quite agree with you that Landor is so absolutely pictorial—though doubtless feeling with him is mostly subservient to the picture.

You need not suppose that I have given up writing verse, because I don't send any. It is true I have temporarily yielded to the stringent necessity of forming a good prose style to have always at command. But I mean to turn to verse again in a little while ; and that is my ultimate goal. Now and then there comes a wave of purer deeper inspiration than could possibly fit in a prose garb, and I feel tempted to obey its call. My next attempt at verse shall be something long, I am determined. I am thinking of a short lyrical drama with an Indian subject, or something of the sort. Meanwhile I have my romance to occupy me. I am about to re-write the first chapter for the third time, as I have now caught glimpse of a fresh conception in the treatment.

You can't think how delighted I shall be when you come next term to Oxford. Crawley and I are both looking forward to it with extreme pleasure. I shall change my rooms to the Meadow Buildings, most of my friends being located there. Is the Stygian Brat really coming to Balliol ? How horrible ! I hope he will die first. It would make even Oxford unbeautiful to think he was here. That supplement in the Magazine did not cost anything more, I assure you. I have seen nothing of Dick this term ; I don't much regret it, for he is mostly unpleasant company. He is so ridiculously affected. So you have found the play at last. I don't wonder at Strange's weeping. When I had it I was reading it one night to Mc-Pherson when a fellow

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named Savage came in. He is a very physical and illiterate person. I went on reading in a tragic tone, (rather well for such a bad reciter as myself) one of the saddest passages—and the effect was visible on Savage's face. He turned quite pale and whispered to Mc.Pheron whether anything was the matter with me. He probably thought I was drunk. Presently he left the room declaring it made him feel as if some cold snow was being put down his back.

I don't think I can prolong this letter.

Yours,
M. G.

South Kensington
Liberal Club.
128 Cromwell Rd.
London. S.W.
Monday.

My dear Binyon,

I write to tell you my new address to which we have just moved from St. Stephen's Avenue. I will show it you some day : it is very different from the old place—but I dare say my brothers will get accustomed to it in time. Of course I (probably) will be going to Oxford in a month's time. There is a confounded railway behind—but as the trains go more gently than I have a right to expect, I can put up with that. There is here a reading-room, a library (in embryo), a smoking room, a club-room where the members meet and lectures are held and I don't know what not. They are going to try and get Mr. Naoroji, one of our most famous countrymen, to give a lecture here about India. If so, perhaps you would like to come and hear him. I hope you have not already written to the place in St. Stephen's Avenue ; but, if you have, they will forward.

I have finished "Les Miserables"—It is a wonderful work, I must confess. You don't, I hope, expect me to come up anything to that. Indeed my romance will take a far more ethereal shape—you won't feel so much that it is modern life I am treating of. Part of my idea is to bring in somehow the struggle of religions that is going on just



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now in India ; partly of course, perhaps mainly, it will be about the sufferings of the people.

Do you want to read those articles in the Nineteenth Century ? If so, I will bring them next time I see you, and you can read them at your leisure. When you meet me next, please appoint some other rendezvous than St. Paul's School. This place, you must remember, is off the Gloucester-Road which is of course opposite the Broad Walk in Kensington Gardens.

Will you be so kind as to lend me your translation of Goethe's "Faust". I have a yearning to read that ; besides, I remember, you recommended me to read it. I have not a translation myself, as I want to wait and get a good one, while I am about it.

I have reformed my sonnet, and will write it out for you. Please give me that rhyme which you said came into your head, for "*backward*" —I have been *racking* my brains but no throes of torture will give birth to anything to replace "*rackward*". There are some of my poems (about a quarter of what I have written lately, a remnant which my pity was induced to spare) which you have not seen ; but as I doubt what you will say to them, it is perhaps of no consequence. I hope your play has progressed. And as to your dramatic poem, remember your promise of reading it to me "*in continuous fashion*". I am eager to hear more of it.

Yours,
Manmohan Ghose.

128 Cromwell Rd.
London. S.W.
August. 1888

My dear Binyon,

I'm glad to hear you have found fine weather at Keswick, and hope you'll enjoy yourself, as of course you cannot fail to do among those divine hills and after the months of rain we have had here. It continues as wintry as ever in London. A bleak north wind is blowing, and we don't ever get a drop of sunshine, tho' plenty of rain. Please give me a description of any memorable walks you go, and

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whatever worth recounting takes place. You mustn't omit to visit Ulswater this time. Go there by the northern ridge of Helvellyn. There's a grand moor there, just after my own heart, bare, dreary and interminable. You drop down to the lake by a village, the name of which I forget. Also return by Sticks Pass which is great fun. I remember we descended it in the dark, lighting matches all the way to avoid breaking our necks. Don't be at all concerned about not writing soon. You should reserve that for rainy days, and hours when you are too tired to do anything else. Of course I am always eager to hear from you, but I'm not so inconsiderate as to expect it when you have got something better to do.

You ask about *Fedora*. I did go to see it, and never was so surprised and charmed in my life. Sarah Bernhardt's acting was exquisite. I had to stand up at the back to see what was going on upon the stage. (The gallery, you know, is execrably built—I wonder they don't change the plan of it.) But I managed tolerably well. The play was very quiet for a tragedy. I confess I couldn't follow most of the dialouge, they talked so rapidly, but sufficiently I think to understand the situations. The actors were all ugly, and they wore black swallow tail coats. However Sarah Bernhardt's acting atoned for all this. It was so natural and taking. Every movement and gesture was lovely and significant. And the voice in which she pronounces the name of the dead person by the death-bed, an entreating tone of infinite pathos, as simple as a child's, was wonderfully effective. They all seemed to act with much greater vivacity and more rapid movements than you see on the English stage. I haven't taken any measures yet to obtain Swinburne's lock. The letter wants mature deliberation. To secure its reaching its destination I shall put "important" in large letters on the envelope ; and enclose two postage-stamps (two will be enough, won't they ?) to pay for carriage of the hair. I think after all I shall put my own name or some milder annonym.

I am afraid my conscience would reproach me, if I went to such lengths of hypocrisy as pretending to be a woman. Indeed it seems altogether a simpler plan. I don't see after all why he shouldn't comply. It won't be much trouble. He has only to take a pair of scissors and cut off a lock ; and that can't be such a very great loss, unless indeed he is growing bald.

My romance I have laid by for a while, and devoted myself to

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writing verses as much as I can. I fancy in this way I shall have clearer conceptions about it when I once more take it up. So you must not expect any just at present. On the other hand I hope I shall be able to send you some verse in a little while. A new subject for a poem has come into my head. But I must defer talking about these matters till next time. I want you to get this letter tomorrow morning.

Yours,
Manmohan Ghose.

128 Cromwell Rd.
S. Kensington
August. 19th.

My dear Binyon,

Thanks for your letter. I was very much pleased with your poem. It is strong and spirited, and the thought is admirable. You are apparently still dominated by the same phase under which you wrote John Averil ; and I should be unwilling to say anything against the effects of that desire for a forcible style which I seem to see in your latest verses. But will you bear with a little adverse criticism ? The main thought here stands out clear and is excellent. But don't you think your fertility of ideas carries you away ? Don't you say a little too much ? That was rather the fault I found with John Averil. I think you ought to be just as jealous of every *thought* you write down, as you are jealous of your *words*. You seem to me to admit too readily, in the whirl of your inspiration, all the rapid suggestions that come out of your subject-matter. If you practised rather more restraint in this respect, I am inclined to think the effect would be better. Read a chorus of Sophocles, and you see how controlled and subdued it is. He always stops short in time ; there is not the least plethora, nothing you could wish away. There is nobody I have read who shows more of this restraint-power than your cousin. It seems quite an instinct with him.

This is more a feeling I had on reading the piece, than a criticism. I couldn't point out any specific faults. Perhaps you insist too strongly on one thing, and repeat yourself too much, in the lines from "Sick,

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stified aspirations" down to "mortal yearnings". If you notice 'aspirations', 'ardours', 'desires', 'yearnings' mean pretty much the same thing as again lower down you have *Yoke, tyrannies, servitude*. Don't you think one or two large comprehensive phrases would be better than all these? In conclusion, I would leave out the lines.

Matched with the rushing wind

That blows and beats about the dark ravines.

They don't fit well to my mind with the "*immortal silence*" and the peace of the mountain. However inspite of all this, I am quite aware that this heaping together of phrases is partly the secret of the vigour in these lines. So don't pay any attention to my fastidious criticism. Don't by any means fight against your desire for force and spirit. It is my poetical creed that one should try all manner of styles (and that is what I would strive for) the beautiful, the simple, the strong and forcible in turns, and read the poets who are conspicuous for those qualities. That is the only training for one who wishes to write well, and it is only thus you evolve a rounded and complete style of your own in the end. If you try at once to be original, your style may be more peculiar (as Browning's for instance) but in the end not a whit the more original, and vastly more defective.

I am sorry I can't send you anything of my own. I haven't succeeded in finishing anything, although inspired by several new subjects. I have such an amount of work to get finished for the October term. I called at your aunt's on a Tuesday evening, and was very pleased to see her. Your cousin and uncle had gone to see "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde". I never met any one so nice as your aunt. You ought to be happy in having such people as your relatives. She gave me an invitation to come and see her again in September when she came back.

Please send any bits of the play, if convenient.

Yours,
Manmohan Ghose



EARLY POEMS

128 Cromwell Road,
London S. W.
September 2nd, 1888

My dear Binyon,

Thanks very much for your poem. I can't help envying your prolific pen. I liked this epode "To the Stormy Wind" considerably better than your last poem, tho' of course I hadn't the proper form of that. It is perhaps one of the most perfect things you have done. Every phrase to my ear sounded right and felicitous, as I read it. Indeed there is not a line one could wish to alter. The middle part is especially good; and altogether the idea is worked out very completely and well. I have tried hard to pick out some faults in it, but I couldn't see any. There couldn't be a surer test of a good poem. You seemed so anxious to see some of my verses, that I have hastily written off some to send you. You won't, I'm afraid, find much to please you in them. There seems something wrong about the thing. I don't think it has enough inspiration—the pauses are badly managed and the rhymes are not good here and there. Please give any suggestions, if you think it worth while. I have also in several places given two words. Will you please say which you think best? The quickness with which you write your verses is quite a rebuke to me. But I find I can write very little really. It is not that the will is wanting. But I have such a diseased emotional nature. After every transient fit of inspiration, I have a kind of reaction into a really cowardly despair. I think I shall never do any good at verses. And then to avoid the pain of such moods I have to seek self-oblivion in reading Latin or Greek. This is the reason why you have had so little from me. At Oxford that was my normal state, and all the time I was there I never wrote a single line—except some satirical verses which I also send you. (They are not bad except that the first line is too violent and clumsy for satire.) Those stanzas which I lately showed you were the first signs of reawakening energy. And these I send now are the only others I have written. But I hope now to conquer this vice in me by continually writing away, no matter what I produce. The satire, by the way, is on a horribly vulgar bore and dullish person at Queen's whom both Crawley and I detest. It is founded on the fact that he always holds his nose in the air and affects superiority over

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everybody else. His name is Firth. Please write soon. I am feeling unaccountably solitary. When will you be coming home? I wish to make this letter a little longer than usual, and write in a somewhat more serious vein. The fact is I have been long ripening quietly my ideas about things and wish now to tell you something of my own inner thoughts. May I inflict them on you?

I was looking over an old letter of yours the other day, in which you expressed some of your own views about religion. You say there that your conviction is that God is—what you term the “sum of all good”. I pondered over this sentence, I remember at the time. But do you know, I have since then come to a very different conclusion. My conviction (and it is a very deep one) is that God is “the sum of all existence”. We have both departed from the popular anthropomorphic idea of God; but after that we seem to have parted and gone widely different roads. There is no conviction I hold so passionately as this one, no truth is so dear to me; and I would fain try and convince you that this is more likely to be true than what you believe. Will you let me try? I think, what dissuaded me from accepting your belief was this thought. What after all is that which we call good? Are not good and evil terms merely relative to us alone. Mankind calls a thing good, because it makes *them* glad and a thing bad which gives *them* pain: and this is true both bodily and spiritually. (Or if you like, instead of pleasure and pain say advantage and disadvantage.) But is God to be so limited to the spheres of the human soul (if by *the sum of all good* you mean *spiritual good* as no doubt you do) or to humanity (if you include all that man finds good for himself). Surely God must be an infinite being in whom we are all contained, rather than the limited being you suppose who is, so to speak, contained in humanity alone. For what is good to humanity may be evil to other parts of what people miscall the creation. Miscall—because I hold that the creation is nothing else but God. We and all the forms of life we see are but passing phases of God, the fluctuations of this eternal life. Man undoubtedly is the most perfect phase, and expresses the deity most. By right of our spirits, which most express the essence of the deity, we are imperishable. And it is very natural to suppose that the soul when it has starved out the rebel powers, that array it by its incessant growth will escape into unfettered liberty. No, I certainly cannot agree with your belief.



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I am, it is true, naturally pagan-minded. But I know and can appreciate Christian ideas; and after some experience of that I have gone back to my native bent. I reverence the word God, and it is too beautiful and expresses too much to die out of the world—But to me Nature is a word more sacred than God. The definition I gave is not mine. It was the conviction of the old Hindu philosophers—it was Spinoza's—it was Goethe's—and it surprises me that so clear-minded a man as Matthew Arnold should have thought otherwise. I shall always be ready to maintain a truth I feel so deeply—that God is nothing working at the back of Nature like an absolute monarch, as Christians suppose. It is my rooted conviction that God is in Nature and Nature in God.

I hope I haven't mystified you with all this. I have tried to express myself clearly. At any rate I am glad I have eased myself with the confession of these things.

I shall go and see your aunt sometime next week, especially as I ought to return some books she lent me.

Yours
M. G.

128, Cromwell Road,
London S.W.
January. 5th

My dear Binyon,

Thanks for your letter. From what you say it must be inexpressibly dull for you, in such an out-of-the-way part of the country as yours without any congenial society whatever. However you will not have much more of it now—it is a comfort to think. I too have been living in almost unbroken solitude. Since you wrote last, I have seen the Phillipses, and spent a very pleasant evening with them. I hear from your aunt that you are going to Torquay for a week, instead of coming to London. Perhaps you will like that better than Winchcombe. I am glad your aunt is so much better, but she must feel it a great misfortune not to be allowed to read—although she seems just as cheerful as usual.

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I am rather surprised you have not written any poetry ; you are generally so teeming with inspiration. I, alas, am so enslaved to Greek and Latin and Logic, that conscience forbids me to step beyond this magic circle—although I have one or two things in my head which I should like to put down upon paper. So I feel pretty much like “the horse on the barren heath, driven round and round by an evil spirit, while fair green pasture lies around.” And this comparison is more to the point because I have now to forswear Homer and Vergil and confine myself within more uninteresting limits. I wonder you don’t like the Iliad so well as the Odyssey. No doubt in a certain way the Odyssey tastes more delightful on our modern palate, but how much mightier and grander is the theme of the Iliad ! I spent whole days doing almost nothing but the Iliad, allured by the thunder of those gleaming battle-pieces. And at night the forms of splendid heroes grouped so nobly together would not leave my mind but still fought and fell, mingling very strangely with other dreams. There are no people, I think, in whom I become so passionately interested as Homer’s men. They are so strong and yet so gentle, simple and frank as children, and altogether so full of *force and fascination* as Walt Whitman would say. They at once become clear and intimate friends, whose actions you follow with the deepest sympathy—whose dangers make you shudder, whose faults you regret, and at whose death you cannot restrain your tears. The peculiar excellence of the battle-pieces you may see anywhere. There are breathless interests at stake, it is all so terribly momentous. But the most exquisite effect is produced when details of horror meet with lines of the most solemn pathos, which though they occur so often, never weary us. When the hero falls with wounds which are described in a fearfully realistic way, “*he stretches out his arms towards his dear comrades, as he breathes away his soul*” and “*darkness is shed upon his eyes*”. And the picture closes with the “two foes lying side by side in the dust” over whom the battle rages.

I am glad you like King Lear so much. Don’t you think it as pathetic as Othello ? What a scene is that in the hovel, and the one in the blasted heath ! Truly Shakespeare had a heart and mind tenfold the size of ordinary men. When I read *Goethe’s Werther* I remember, it reminded me of *Lear*. In both these works of sublime genius, the poets wish I think to show us how the finest natures, natures of

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generous and passionate fibre, often sink under their own strength. Lear is contrasted with his cold and venomous daughters, and this Shakespeare does because he himself possessed just such a nature as Lear's, and warmly sympathises with him. Goethe, on the other hand who had an almighty will that could always control his powerful and fiery soul, naturally contrasts Albert not unfavourably with Werther, while there is not a little irony in the delineation of the latter. However Goethe himself declares that the greatest men, those who have most influenced the world and those whom the world loves best, have been men of the same inexhaustible energy and fervour—in whom the fires of youth keep burning even to extreme old age.

I returned a little while ago to Sir Walter Scott's romances, which I have not read for years. He is certainly a very great writer, one who will always delight me. For purely romantic situations there is no one to equal him. His descriptive talents too are considerable, and his insight into the spirit of other ages seems like a magic revelation. For this latter reason, all, Scott's works will continue to be highly valuable.

(*End of the letter missing*)

128, Cromwell Rd.
S. Kensington
London. W.
March '89

My dear Binyon,

I have been expecting to hear from you all this time. How are you, and what are you doing in your remote solitude—(I fear I have forgot the address, and shall have to address to Oxford). Have the Muses been propitious, and have you anything new for me to see? Please remember to send the lines "To a Fir-tree" which I have not read yet. I have been to see the Phillipses and spent an evening there. We had a discussion about Tennyson; and I played a game of draughts with your musical cousin, Harold—in which of course I was beaten, as I lack patience too much to win at games of thought.

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Stephen's play was much talked about, and I am very anxious to see it ; but of course it is being lent about and naturally in great request. All your cousins were condemning you for the change which has come over you at Oxford, your athletic and other pursuits which you are going in for so passionately—but here I tried to defend you for as I think, you are quite justified in doing all this. Besides I think that such cessations from production are necessary even for a rich creative nature as yours. Even the creator of the world must rest on the seventh day and action and reaction is a law that rules us here as elsewhere.

Your aunt was very kind as usual, and lent me a whole pile of books to read, among them "Echermann's conversations with Goethe" which I shall be sure to read with great interest. But from some expressions she dropped, they seemed to think that I didn't care to come there, and feared that they proved dull company. It is exactly the opposite of this—I always, come with great longing and depart regretfully, and feel very happy in the meantime. Indeed I think them the nicest people I have ever met, especially your aunt. She is an adorable woman. But they may easily have got this idea from my behaviour. I have never been accustomed to society, and am silent and embarrassed what to say, being unwilling to speak what I feel or think from a fear every moment of committing a solecism. This is construed as apathy, and I am quite at a loss how to put myself right. The dear kind people have no idea what delight I feel in their society ; nor how I must struggle with myself to refrain from coming oftener. *Must*—because it is with me a hard cruel necessity. I feel deeply that I must always seem a stranger to English people, and only slight relations can ever grow out of this. But I have a passionate nature, hungering to give and receive sympathy of a far deeper kind than such relations afford. If the world was filled with worthless unloveable people, I could be happy perhaps. But when I meet with people, I like, a strange uncontrollable passion awakes in me, and I have to tear myself away as from a dangerous temptation. I should be going beyond the bounds of what is proper, unless I did so. Books are my only refuge, which I seek not from choice but from necessity, and I try to allay a burning breast with hard intellectual labour. But alas ; this is a poor and temporary sedative. I find at last the words of the sage come home to me.

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Naturam expellas furca tamen usque recurret. Love is as necessary to me as to every other human being. I may imprison myself in solitude and devote every hour to calm cultivation yet without this the richest gains of mind will in the end seem as dust, and life becomes a dreary blank. It is hard perhaps that my nationality should be so against me in England. But it is in my destiny. At any rate I much prefer it to any other alternate. There is nothing I dread so much as going back to India. I feel quite at home with my surroundings here, however people may be affected to me; there I should be utterly out of sympathy with everything. I know neither the people nor the language—all is strange and alien. I am four-fifths an Englishman, if not entirely one; and it is in England I should do the most good to my country and myself. However I must break off these sad reflections, which do me no good and will grieve you to no purpose—and must ask you to pardon me for sending such melancholy stuff for your perusal which I ought perhaps to have kept to myself. But it has eased me much to have written all this.

I have felt too sad for much healthy creation. But I have been reading steadily, and got thro' a good deal, chiefly Greek, it being my purpose to drink in at every pore all the best things in Greek poetry. Homer's Iliad I am reading thro' again paying special attention to the structure of the story; of which I am making an argument. I am doing the same with Shakespeare's tragedies. This latter will, I feel sure, give me an insight into and feeling for plot which will be very valuable to me. It is long since I have touched Shakespeare; strange to say now I am reading him again I feel as if everything were new to me. This shows that my powers of appreciation must have developed marvellously of late. I can see a thousand things I never saw before. I have read also Aeschylus's Prometheus Bound—which is certainly extremely fine. Here you see the same powerful imagination, the same bold large outline and the strong bold hand which planned the Agamemnon. But it is scarcely to be called a play; there is no proper plot; and its object is quite removed from the sphere of human action, and lifted into a high poetical region—It is a splendid poetical subject which gives to it its interest; for what can be more poetical than the myth of Prometheus? I have indulged in various speculations as to how the myth may have arisen. Apparently Aeschylus as he looks

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upon the world sees Man in triumphant conflict with the boisterous might of the elements thro' the godlike power of Invention. His imagination travels back to a time when Man was weaker than the destructive powers in Nature, and he takes this Creative Power in man and personifies him as Prometheus, a God who helps mankind against the tyranny of the Gods who rule the elements, and is chained to Caucasus and tortured for so doing. But the remarkable point is that Prometheus is not merely the inventive power in man, but also in Nature itself. For why, if otherwise, would he be represented as helping Zeus to order his new and confused kingdom? What a flood of light does this throw upon the Greek conception of a God! To them a God was anything that possessed and manifested vital power in the world—not merely the forces of Nature alone, as people suppose.

I went yesterday to see the Merry Wives at the Haymarket and enjoyed it very much; it was followed by *Grengoiri*, which I liked almost better. It is a beautiful play, at least as acted by Beerbohm Tree.

Please write when you have time, and tell me all about yourself. I have been vainly trying to finish a poem I have in hand to send in this letter, but inspiration I find is too fitful. I am just now stricken down by a strange disease. It is very trivial but rather awkward as it has confined me to bed for a day. It would be such a solace to get some verses from you, as I am sure you must have written something by this time.

Yours ever,
M. G.

128 Cromwell Road.
S. Kensington
London S. W.
March. 1889

My dear Binyon,

Many thanks for your letter and the poem. I am still at the Club, I don't know why. Perhaps it is because I found no other place quiet, there being no other lodgers to vex and interrupt me: and I always find difficulty in moving from a place to which I am once settled.

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I like your poem extremely. The description is one of the loveliest and freshest you have ever written, and the conception too is good. In the latter respect however you haven't, I think, reached the ultimate truth. If you meant it as a rebuke or lament for the restlessness and yearning of man in solitude, and went no further—well and good. But when you speak of us as being faithless to our kind mother-earth, and desire us to find satisfaction in Nature—I really think you are demanding too much of us. Surely Wordsworth is right when he says, (after seeing a beautiful sight)

But now upon this thought I cannot brood
It is unstable as a dream of night
Nor will I praise a cloud, however bright,
Disparaging Man's gifts and proper food.
Grove, isle, with every shape of sky-built dome
Tho' clad in colours beautiful and pure
Find in the heart of Man no natural home.
The immortal Mind craves objects that endure :
These cleave to it ; from these it cannot roam
Nor they from it : their fellowship is secure.

No ; human nature is a complicated and manifold thing, with manifold needs, all of which it craves to be satisfied ere it can be wholly happy. And surely one of the most natural and right cravings is that for fellowship and sympathy. Wordsworth says again—

Farewell, farewell, the heart that lives alone
Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind ;
Such happiness wherever it is known
Is to be pitied, for, 'tis surely blind.

Of course there are two sides to the question, and yours may be the right one for some people. But all this has nothing to do with your poem really. It is an exquisite little thing and gave me the sweetest pleasure. I envy you the power of writing such perfect descriptions. I am waiting with great expectation what you have promised to send next time.

As for my poetical endeavours, do not expect anything complete for some time. I came back to London with great plans and aspirations in my head. But, alas, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak ! It is not that I lack visions and conceptions. I have plenty of those.

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But I am so uncertain and so slow in execution that I cannot make as much as I should like of my moments of inspiration. This torments me more than anything. What shall I ever accomplish if I don't learn to write faster and more abundantly. However I believe it springs altogether from a want of practice, and I am determined to write on and on, if but for exercise, until I can have my talent thoroughly at command whenever I please.

I am once more at work on the "Exile". The difficult metre and double rhymes are very troublesome—so I don't hope to do more than a few stanzas. I have begun another poem at the sametime. The Romance I must leave till my insight into plot and the structure of a story is a little more mature; but I am already cherishing the the greatest hopes of what it shall be,

I was much pleased with your admiration of the "Agamemnon"—but I expected no less when once you had read it. It is indeed a glorious work; you are quite right as to misconceptions on the subject of the Greek drama in minds of ignorant people. But the profuse bloom and the deep creative glow of the Agamemnon is something unique among the Greek plays, don't you think so? Your beautiful lines on Helen would do well as a motto for the Iliad. Those lines of Aeschylus on Helen are indeed quite untranslatable. I find in the notes I made for the translation the rendering—

'Love's rose, whose thorn pierces the heart'

But this, tho' it expresses well enough the bliss and anguish of love, which is the point of the line, is of course bare and without magic.

I have just finished Euripides "*Medea*". It is a noble play, which you should read. I cannot think how I can have been blind to the excellences of Euripides for so long. I have done him great injustice, and must expiate it by reading him more. There are two famous soliloquies in the Medea, which are extremely fine—one of them, where she is about to kill her children is really one of the loveliest and most pathetic thing, I have ever read.

I am glad to see you so full of activity. But I would not build too far into the future. You are quite right, I think, to plunge into society at Oxford, if you take pleasure in it. But there may come a time when you will find less of it sufficient.

Your consolation for my feeling lonely, I fear I could not quite receive—tho' your sympathy is a great deal to me. Of course, being

EARLY POEMS

as you are so prodigally blest with friends, you cannot imagine my isolation. But I had better be silent for the future on this subject, as I am resolved to bear patiently what cannot be amended. If I could but once throw myself into a sustained work of creation, it would be a great relief. But this does not seem likely at present. I wish you to get this letter today ; so I will close now, and write very soon again.

Yours ever,
Manmohan Ghose.

128 Cromwell Rd.
April 4th.

My dear Binyon,

I was waiting a letter from you (particularly on the subject of the tale), but as it has not come, I thought I had better anticipate it. Unfortunately I can only offer a few suggestions, and nothing more—from a natural feeling of constraint as you have not clearly defined each of the parts we are going to take. Had you not better write the first scene according to your own conception, and send it to me, so that I may be able to see what it is to be like, and adapt myself to the story ? The Indian of our tale has a story to tell, which story I had better write and leave everything else to you—will this do ? Thus each of our plots can be done after our own conception, only we must know each other's plot to avoid inconsistencies.

How do you like your new place in Herefordshire ? Is it pretty country ? From the address I should imagine it to be rather solitary.

I hope you have renewed your inspiration, and are finishing 'John Averil'. I was looking over it again the other day, and find I like that 'prosaic' style of writing, as you call it, better than much that is brighter among your other verse. You have such a large and real command of language, that you have special need to control it : and this you are doing more and more, as you go on. Many lines, or rather whole poems of yours seem to have a vague effect upon me ; but I never liked to tell you of this, as I suspected and am now assured, that this must be due to a radical difference between us. Still, I think, while you are inclined to be full and poetically vague, you sometimes

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err too much on this side. For my own part I know that I have an overfondness for definiteness and prosaic baldness. But I pardon myself for this, since I have an unconquerable feeling how important it is to make oneself clear and tangible (not only in parts but as a whole effect). 'John Averil' is perfectly clear, if one knows his story, but as you do not tell it us in the poem, how is the reader to grasp it wholly, who has not had like myself, a previous explanation? Surely you ought to bring in something of it afterwards, or append an explanatory note.

I am just now fired to do something to my long romance, and I hope to execute a few chapters before the Vacation is over. As for poetry, I have long been in a truly distressing condition. My old ideals for writing have quite left me, and I am looking about everywhere for new ones, and no sooner do I find one than it is shattered; and so it goes on. But the most painful part of it is, that I am constantly reproaching myself for not writing, which only leads to unsuccessful disheartening attempts. To let this painful phase pass over, I must devote myself to reading and working at my novel, if I can. You will now understand my unwillingness to show you any verse I may have written, and not be surprised that I can't send you those Hexameter verses. The rhythm was not so bad, but when the piece was half finished I had an entirely new conception of it, and half-finished it remains. Half of all this trouble I am sure springs from a cowardly spirit, a suffering myself to be disheartened by the slightest discomfiture, which is very difficult to repress.

I think there is no external news to tell you. Could you tell me on what days Burne Jones' studio is open? A friend of mine and my brother would like to see it.

Yours,
Manmohan Ghose

128 Cromwell Rd.
S. Kensington
July 12.

My dear Binyon,

Thanks for your letter. I am sorry I have not answered it before this; but somehow I was not feeling in the mood for writing, and I

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had also much to say to you—so for these reasons I deferred it till I felt more inclined. I went to see your aunt as soon as I came down to London. She did not seem very well, and looked tired and sadly in need of rest—She has gone to Worthing with Stephen for a few weeks, and I hope this interval of repose will do her good. It must be very hard work for her having to look after so many. What she wants is a good long rest. —I really don't know whether Stephen is going on with the "*Epic*". He said he was at work on some old things he had not done. Perhaps he included the "*Epic*" among these—but he doesn't appear to have written any fresh pieces for it. I tried to get him to show me the better version of that poem in the Temple Bar, which you liked so much. But he has lost it—he sent the two versions to the Editor who put in the shorter and inferior one, and he hasn't another copy of the other. Stephen was in great form when I saw him. He told some very amusing stories, and read several things from Wordsworth and Byron in that beautiful way he has of reading. I can quite understand his enthusiasm for Byron. He is somewhat of a kindred spirit—full of fire and force, and with plenty of irony and humour. He is gifted beyond measure. There is one thing however which I think he lacks—and that is true reflection. But there—*non omnia possumus omnes* and perhaps the most captivating personalities would lose half their charms if Nature had not accentuated some few good qualities in them to the exclusion of others. Stephen is a born poet, and his imagination rules everything else : you cannot be near him without feeling how fine a sense for things he has. There is a distinction about him which will fascinate people.

It rejoices me to hear you speak so contentedly about settling down to a long prospect of reading and writing. It is not always, when everything is dull and uninspiring around you, that you can rally and engage your inward energies. At least I find it so. Please don't hurry in writing your poem on "Youth and Age" altho' I am looking forward to it very anxiously, I should much rather you took your time over it. You find your subject-matter too suggestive. Among my meditated poems is one on *Immortality*—and in trying to build up a poem out of my thoughts on that subject, I find myself just in the same predicament. The only thing is to wait. Time is the only divinity that will shape your rough-hewn thoughts ; and a moment of inspiration will in due time deliver the long and silent

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birth. I shall be particularly interested in these verses. It is such a time since you wrote anything, I wonder if your ideas and style will have changed at all.

I find Pindar hard. But he has not disappointed my high expectations. The Pindaric Ode is one of the finest forms invented in poetry. It has such completeness and unity. Altho' full of rapid transitions and digressions, these are all connected with the one dominant idea. And what a master of style Pindar is too ; Horace describes him better than any one.

Reading Pindar has inspired me with a desire to write an Ode in his style. I have long thought of writing* a poem on Napoleon but never could fix on the form I should cast in into. The Pindaric ode will be just the thing. It is perhaps a little ambitious. But I want to make a bolder attempt than hitherto. What do you think of the idea ? None of the poems written on Napoleon satisfy me—Byron's is a grand invective—but that is all. It looks at that great hero only from one side, and is fair neither to his virtues nor his faults. I have quite new ideas on the subject, and I think we who come after Napoleon's time will be able to write more in the impartial spirit of historical criticism. Of course I shall take my time over it, and choose my similes and historical allusions with great deliberation.

Now that my mind is full of Pindar, I have been re-reading all the great odes in English. Wordsworth's great Philosophical ode and Milton's on the Nativity I have always admired. But I never knew Gray's two odes were so extremely fine. He had a right to call them Pindaric for they recall Pindar by their fire and impetuosity. I think I like the "Progress of Poesy" best of the two, don't you ? I send you the stanzas which I promised. You must not judge it as a complete poem—I wrote it rather hastily as I didn't want the idea it contains to slip out of my memory. I have several more stanzas to add. But you must tell me how you like it. You see it is altogether philosophical. Those lines descriptive of a rainy October day which I meant for it I shall make into a separate poem. Those verses on the lovers in a garden are also progressing—and if I can but attain my ideal, it will be a really good poem. I have besides several other fragments in different stages of completion, which I work at from time to time.

Could you tell me of a good magazine for which to write a story ?

EARLY POEMS

Beggar that I am, I shall be compelled to seek some money in this way if only to pay my many debts. I have an idea for a Tale—and it would not take long to write it. I hope, by the way, you have not wanted the 10 shillings back which you lent me—But I need not ask this. You are so kind, that even if you wanted them ever so much you would not say so. I shall send them as soon as ever I can scrape something together.

Please write soon. I am longing to see your verses, and besides to hear something more from you. You will soon have some congenial company at Winchcombe, if what I hear be true. For Robert tells me that he and some of his brothers are going to stay with you for a time. Is it true that you are coming to London at the end of July? That is another rumour I heard, but it sounds too good to be true. Please write as soon as you can.

Yours etc.,

M. G.

128 Cromwell Rd.

S. Kensington

July. 24th 1889

My dear Binyon,

I am sorry not to have written before this and thanked you for your beautiful verses. I like "Youth" very much. It has all your natural force—and zest and richness of its own. It is very complete too in structure, and reads much like a Greek chorus—tho' I don't think I would have lines so irregular and rough as some I see there. The thoughts also are extremely characteristic of you. It is a way of looking at things, which I cannot quite make my own—but for that very reason it is the more interesting to me.

There is one solitary passage however which I wish to notice, because I think it illustrates so well where your weakness lies. You have the lines

Thirsting for every fount, consumed with fire
Swept by strong winds of measureless desire
Daring pursuer of the steps of Truth
Mounting in matchless aspiration
With leaping veins and passionate pulses
Trembles and burns the soul of youth.

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This is all very fine. But are you not making your old mistake of vaguely repeating one single thing—here the *ardour* of youth? *Thirsting, consumed with fire, swept by measureless desire, aspiration, leaping veins and passionate pulses, trembles, burns*—all these are kindred words with slight variations in meaning. Now do you really *want* all this? Could you not have described the ardour of youth much better in two lines? This seems to me the one bad tendency you have. You let yourself be carried away by *words* and don't think enough. I believe if you thought more, you would economize your words better. You seem here to have chosen your words for mere *force*, without caring about satisfying the *mind*.

Bonner une expression forcible à un sentiment faible.

.Voltaire.

Very true. You want, I think, in this passage to know more exactly and define more sharply the different traits of youth which will suit your simile. You speak of youth; ardour; could you not add more definitely his *delight in action*, his *prodigal waste of spirit*, his *impatience of fact*, his *hatred of inaction*, and other such like distinctive qualities. I particularly object to *leaping veins and passionate pulses*—it is a downright tautology.

The rest of the poem is quite free from this fault of vague repetition, tho' there are suppressed signs of it in combinations like—*confined, parcelled and probed—fall nor falter—so vexed, so burdened*. The poem is so clear in conception, and forms such a satisfying whole that it would be almost a pity to single out any parts for special praise. I think I like best perhaps the description of Bacchus and the last twelve lines of the poem. The former I like less because of its own beauty than of its truth to those glorious ideals of Greek art. After the exultation of this passage—the sigh.

Alas, the disenchanting years have rolled comes in very effectively. But best of all perhaps are the last lines.

If winter come to winter.

When shall men look for spring?

an exquisite epigrammatic finish, admirably clenching the whole argument.

I am so sorry I have nothing to send you in return for "Youth". I have waited all this time before writing, only to try and get something done. I cannot finish the garden poem yet—I find the continuous



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description very difficult. I seem most at home in a subject where there is some eloquence and argument wanted.

The idea of a romantic story in verse I thoroughly approve of. You remember how I urged you once to write something in narrative. That was because I thought you had been running too much in one groove. However you had best not write, until a subject comes to you.

I long to see your new poems which you say you have nearly finished. Please write soon and send them. I shall also have a feast of good things, when your essay is ready. I rejoiced to hear that you are coming to London so soon ; only I hope (you must pardon such a selfish wish) that you will not be so busy seeing people all the time as you were last time. .

I have much more to say about Pindar and my design of a poem on Napoleon—but you will think it ungrateful after your promptness in answering me, if I don't send off this letter at once. So I will not prolong it any further. Thanks for your information about the Magazines—I should think Belgrave will be best—from your description ; but we shall see when I have finished the story.

Yours
M. Ghose.

128 Cromwell Rd.
S. Kensington
August. 1889

My dear Binyon,

I write with a mighty cold in my head, so you must not expect this letter to be too interesting or sensible. The Gods have certainly been cruelly inauspicious towards me of late. I have had to undergo a course of strict dieting to regain my digestion and now behold me visited with an accursed cold, that has consigned me for the present to the blankest regions of stupidity. It is lamentably dull for me, now that you are gone. But I try my best to fill up the time. I have a vast deal of Great's work to get through. But my attempts at getting through it have certainly been rather spasmodic hitherto. Still I have five weeks before me. I am just now reading books on

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Greek sculpture, and visiting the Museums (it is a thing I have shamefully neglected). Is it not a fascinating subject? I am so smitten with much that I have seen that I am tracing out all the most beautiful heads of the Greek Gods and Heroes, that I come across. You shall see them when we meet next, they will do very well to adorn a manuscript book of poems. I think perhaps the loveliest piece of sculpture I saw, that at least which took my fancy most, is the Eros of Praxitelus, the Cupid of Centicelle, as it is called; also a beautiful head of Apollo in the British Museum, in the finest style of the early Greek sculptors. At the same time I have read the history of Greek sculpture thro' all its stages. It is marvellously interesting. What supreme testimony it is to the difficulty of writing great poetry, and the need there is of the highest gifts and most favourable circumstances, that at the end of the Peloponnesian War when poetry was degenerating with the age, sculpture should be in full vitality, nay, should even go on for two or three generations more as perfect as ever, and only exhaust itself because it could do no more. Or was it because the Greeks were a race of sculptors, but in poetry they too had their limitations? Whatever be the cause, it is certainly astonishing to hear of the myriads of good works of art produced in Greece. Greece seems to have been plundered over again and again by the Romans of its glories in sculpture and painting, and yet to be left almost as rich as ever.

Do you know much about modern sculpture? Are there any living sculptors of any merit? I went to see Wilson the other day at Sydenham. He is living there with a friend who is a painter and a young lady whose husband is an artist in Calcutta. Wilson himself is apparently very literary, but has no gift for verse whatever.

I don't know what you would think of him. He is one of those people, who look as if they had something in them; but of whom it is impossible to say what they will turn out. He has an artistic head and features, that promise good things. He is an extremely nice fellow to talk to—but his education has unfortunately been defective—He has never learnt Greek. His reading seems to be rather towards German literature—(a bad sign perhaps)—and he has a turn for philosophy. He intends to write "*Tales from Schiller*" as a sort of opening—to introduce himself to the public.

I am feeling much too wretched physically to write anything.

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But I mean to finish something to send you, as soon as I am a little better. Please send anything that may have escaped from you. How is the play progressing? I hope you will succeed in recasting it to your satisfaction. But don't you think the change of scene from Italy to France will in some ways be a disadvantage? *Brunone* is such a thoroughly Italian character, I can hardly picture him in a French setting; for the French are not a vindictive people. But I quite see your reasons in wishing to change the surroundings; you think the humorous element will come in much better, if you did so.

I saw in the Pall Mall the other day that Edwin Arnold has just started from Liverpool on a voyage for America, China and India. So it is no use writing to him, is it?

Please write soon.

Yours ever
M. Ghose.

128 Cromwell Rd.
S. Kensington
September 89.

My dear Binyon,

Many thanks for your beautiful long letter. I am considerably better now, tho' not as well as I should like to be. Apparently I have an almost constitutional weakness of the liver, and must be careful of the food I eat. The evil has been of slow growth, probably brought on by the rich and heavy dinners we have at Christ Church—and it is only gradually that I can hope to get back a good digestion. However I feel quite comfortable enough now to go on with my usual occupations.

What you say about sculpture interested me much. I do not know the "Psyche" you mention. Indeed I know very little about most of the Greek sculpture abroad—the British and Kensington Museums being as far as I have got to in my studies as yet, and these alone I find quite inexhaustible. I suppose what you say about genuine Greek *statues* is true—most of those we have are Roman copies—But not so with heads, and the reliefs on vases and sarcophagi.

EARLY POEMS

There is a glorious head of Zeus in the British Museum, which, it is almost certain, is part of one of Polycleitus' masterpieces, the statue of "Zeus Meilichios"—the "Mild Zeus" mentioned by Pausanias. The head is done in Pentelic marble beautifully clear and white. Polycleitus was a younger contemporary of Pheidias, and belonged to the Argive School, and some of his works the Greeks of his time even preferred to many things done by the great Athenian artist. This head then was made in the golden prime of Greek art; and so was the head of Apollo which I like so much. That is easily seen by the liny sharpness characteristic of the early style—which Praxiteles changed later on into the soft and flowing outline, that suited his subjects so well—for he is said to have excelled everybody in the delineation of feminine and youthful beauty). I am sure you would like this Apollo; the hair is bound with a broad fillet and falls down in beautiful masses on the shoulders, and the expression of grave sweetness and majesty on the countenance is something wonderful. But the Eros of Centicelli is perhaps even more marvellous. I am sure you must know the marble I mean; there is a cast of it in the South Kensington. It is the statue of a youth, complete only to the waist, with the face looking downward—the smallness of the head bringing out all the more clearly the exquisite finish of every one of those divine lineaments. It stood originally between the statues of Phryne and Aphrodite by the same master in a temple of that goddess at Thebes; and Pausanias tells us a story which shows how highly Praxiteles himself prized it. The sculptor was then living at Athens with Phryne the beautiful *εἰραῖρα*, so famous for her loveliness and gifts of wit and humour; and was brooding and meditating over the composition of this Eros. Praxiteles was so much in love with Phryne that he promised to give her any of his works she liked and she not knowing which to choose, said "Tell me, Praxiteles, which do you consider your masterpiece?" But this he refused to say, and all her attempts to discover the secret were useless. At length she resorted to a clever stratagem. One day when Praxiteles was about to enter the house, she came running out with a cry of "Fire! fire!" whereupon he rushed in and siezing the statue of Eros unfinished as it was, wrapped his chlamys about it, and hastened out with that darling child of his imagination, thankful to have saved it from the fancied fire; and he was met on the threshold by

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Phryne, laughing and clapping her hands in triumph and claiming the Eros as her own "or else," she cried, "thou art a false and perjured man!"

Phryne must have been a miracle of beauty. Not only did she serve Praxiteles as a model for many of his Aphrodites, but she was also taken by the great painter Apelles for his famous picture of Aphrodite risen from the sea-waves and wringing the wet from her hair. Do you know that beautiful story of her trial at Athens? I always think it is so characteristic of the Greeks, such a revelation of the Greek genius, and why it was the Greeks were such marvellous sculptors and painters. Phryne was brought before the Athenian lawcourts on the charge of impiety. Everything went against her when, as a last resort, the orator Hyperides who was pleading for her tore the veil from her face and bosom; and with wonderful effect *δεισιδαιμονία* a shudder of religious awe, the story says ran through the assembly at the sight, and they immediately acquitted her, exclaiming that it would be an impiety to destroy a creature in whom Aphrodite had enshrined her fairest charms.

(The end of letter have been lost)

South Kensington Liberal Club
128, Cromwell Road, S. W.

September, 30th 1889

My dear Binyon,

I am sorry not to have written before. I hope this will reach you before you get to Oxford. I too intend to go there, if possible, before term begins—probably on Friday next—but I'm not sure. I have written to your aunt, though somewhat late, I am afraid—I hope she got the letter, before changing her address. Your poems pleased me much. The piece from Catullus is charming—not only is it a faithful version—but you have kept the beauty and pathos of the lines wonderfully. And the treatment of the Elegiacs is far above that poor endeavour of mine which seems to have pleased you so much. Perhaps

LETTERS

I should object only to the double repetition of "*gifts*"—in two different lines. It is a pretty trick of style—that iteration of Catullus—and has a solemn and pathetic effect—but it should not, I think, be indulged in too often, else it is apt to lose much of its emphasis. The other poem too pleased me not a little ; brevity of form, and a slightly epigrammatic turn of expression are what are needed in them. It would be quite good if we were to write more of these short things ; especially when we wish to express our passing thoughts and phases of feeling, which one is often tempted, I find, to cast into a form out of all proportion to their importance. Long poems, it seems to me, ought to have only subject-matter of the highest import. It would be hard, for example to write a really good Ode on Napoleon in a short form ; to treat adequately of the fortunes of heroes and the great events of the world, one requires some space of canvas. And a lyric of strong passion could not possibly be short ; the strength of the author's feelings require space to exert their impetuosity and volume. But a poet cannot always be writing masterpieces ; and when on his more ordinary level of thought and feeling it is surely the best thing for him, and it is the mark of a true artist, to make length of his form proportionate to the importance of his matter. To me at least it is a continual source of dissatisfaction that my passing ideas and feelings escape me, simply because I have not a proper poetical form to put them in. It is therefore only my fixed and deeply rooted ideas that find expression at all. And I am sure other people must feel the same thing. How great a gain, how highly desirable it would be if we could thus restrict ourselves to a short form, and train ourselves to writing in it ! It only needs to get into the habit of putting down the ideas that come into one's head—and then wording them into verse. Of course a true poet has a natural fear of becoming too obtrusively sententious ; but then his *true feeling* ought to save him from that. I think that little thing of Ben Jonson's "It is not growing like a tree" is a fine model for writing this kind of poem. This of Matthew's on the other hand

What poets feel not, when they make,
A Pleasure in creating,
The world in its turn will not take
Pleasure in contemplating

is just what one should not write ; it has no *feeling* about it, and might

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just as well be expressed in prose. Simonides was a master in this sort of writing—chiefly epitaphs. Take for instance

Φῆ γὰρ τὸν Τρομέαχον παῖδ' ἐπὶ χεῖρας ἔχοντα
 ἦεν· ἀφ' ἡμερῆς ἴσμεν ἡλυσίην·
 "ὦ Τρομερίδην, πᾶσι φίλον οὐκ ἔστι λήξειν
 οὐτ' ἄρ' ἔτι σέθεν, οὔτε σαρκοσύνην."

How all the beautiful pride of the dying youth is told in those two simple lines, or take these which are so lovely and touching

"Ὑστατα δ' ἔτι τὰδ' ἴδμεν φίλην ποτὶ μητέρα γερῶν
 δαυρούμεν, δέρας χερσὶν ἱφαισόμενα
 "αὐτὴ μένει παρὰ πατρί, τίκασι δ' ἰπὶ λυγροῦ καὶ
 ἄλλης, σὺ πολὺ γῆρας καδελμώσα."

Or this which is ironical and humorous

Πολλὰ φεγὼν καὶ πολλὰ πῶν καὶ πολλὰ σακ' ἔω.
 ἄθροισεν, κτερεῖ Τιμοκλεὺς Ὀδύσειον

(Timsoreon of Rhodes was a poet, famous for his powers of eating and his spiteful and satirical poems, one of which on Themistocles is extant)

Your little poem is a lovely one, and quite artistically rounded off. I should like to see you write some more of the same sort.

Why are you so dissatisfied with your old verses? Although it is perhaps salutary for one to be so now and then—it grieves me to hear you pass such a wholesale condemnation on them. It is not true that they all lack cohesion, matter and force; at least *I* shall refuse to believe it. You have plenty of force—and your best things—*Psyche* for instance—are as artistic and complete as could be desired. As to matter, thought—there perhaps you are a little nearer the truth. But then that is a fault common to all of us and it is only time that will build up our minds and give us a clearer out-

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look on things. Perhaps I have laid too much stress on this point in former criticisms of mine ; and certainly, when I come to think of it, it does seem ridiculously presumptuous of me to have criticized so freely things the like of which I myself could never have conceived. But that is the fault of all critics.

It pleases me greatly that your aunt should have liked those verses of mine so much. I should value no one's opinion so highly as hers. Nor did I mean any derogation to your powers as a critic by calling your admiration *generous*. You say there is something *haunting* in my verses. That I think is owing to your reading them more than once. Sometimes, I find, quite stupid verses that I have read somewhere come back to me in some inexplicable way and I cannot forget them. However I am quite incapable of self-criticism ; of that I am fully aware, and if such true lovers of poetry as you and your aunt find them good, there must be something in these verses—and this is quite sufficient to encourage me and make me happy. —Excuse this nasty and ill-written letter. I have made the discovery that it is almost a fortnight since you wrote—and I must send this off at once. Believe me

Ever yours
Manmohan Ghose

You ask about the author of that poem I sent. That is a very interesting question. It was anciently ascribed to Anacreon—but the style and diction has made people believe that it is much later. Painting too in Anacreon's time was quite a nascent art. The date, I should think, might be ascertained from the. *Ροδο κοίπνε τευχης* which evidently shows that Rhodes was at the time the most famous school of painting.

128, Cromwell Rd.,
London, S.W.
Dec. 20th.

My Dear Binyon,

Thanks for your note. I was going to write to you, indeed I had begun a letter, some time ago ; but I didn't know where to address it,

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and so had to wait till you should write. First as to the article, I'm extremely sorry that it has not yet been written. I confess this with great shame and contrition. You see, my political convictions have undergone a complete change, since I wrote that last article ; and now not only is it all I can do to get up an enthusiasm for the subject, but I'm afraid of laying myself open to ridicule, by a contradiction of my former opinions. Would it make a great difference, if I were to drop the article about India, and write a story instead ? Or else, if I can't spin one out, send in a piece of criticism and some poems ? I promise this, and you may depend upon my good faith. I shall endeavour to get something done this very night. Please mediate with your brother for me. He must be dreadfully angry, that I did not send the paper by the appointed time.

How do you like your new surroundings ? It sounds as if it was a rather pretty place, as no doubt it is. It is exceedingly dull in London, so you need not regret not having come back here. We have been enveloped in fogs for the last week. There is nothing remarkable to see at the Theatres except "Captain Swift," tho' I believe Irving will put on *Macbeth* shortly at the Lyceum. But as I am short of money just now, that source of enlivenment is closed to me. I am working pretty hard. Have got thro' much of the *Iliad*, which is of course, pure pleasure to read. The last time I read the *Iliad*, I read it quite uncritically, without at all bringing the understanding to bear upon it ; so I can now all the more appreciate the vast difference this makes in one's enjoyment of a work. What glorious fire and rapidity of verse it has ! and what is more, what glorious truth and nature ! And do we not see here the utter supremacy of a Greek mind to modern ones ? Do you remember our conversation on simplicity of thought (especially in connection with Browning) one night in my rooms. Nothing could better illustrate what we both agreed on then—than Homer. How does Homer manage to be so wise, while he is at the same time the simplest and most naïve of all poets ? Merely, I suppose, because Homer looked upon life with his simple full Greek eye, and his observations on life come half unconsciously and with easy spontaneity like great golden stars out of the clear firmament of his narrative. What a contrast to Browning and our age generally who cut the divine instruments of the Muses, meant for melody and passion into fishing-rods to capture ideas (to use a

LETTERS

very strong metaphor.) It seems as if they had nothing better to do than torture their minds in perpetual search for strange and far-fetched thoughts. There is no safer prophecy we could make than that there must soon come a strong reaction against all this, and a return to simple incident, and description, and pure heart-felt lyrical poetry.

Have you written anything since I saw you last ? If so, please don't forget to send it me. I have had many a little flush of inspiration, but nothing has come of them yet.

I have not seen the Phillipses as yet. At least the last time I went there, they were all out. I was very much disappointed as I am anxious to know how your aunt is. I also went to the studio where your cousin paints, but found he had not been there for several days.

Please write soon, when you have time.

Yours
M. Ghose,

28 Kempsford Gardens
Earl's Court,
Wed. Jan. 8th, 1890

My dear Binyon,

Forgive my remissness once again in writing to you. I have been ill—stricken with this malady which is so prevalent in London—the continental influenza, people say,—only in a very mild form. I have had to stay indoors for the last week ; and it was not very pleasant, as you may imagine. I saw nobody, and felt very lonely and miserable ; so much so, that I thought it better not to write—I should only have made you unhappy with all the doleful things I had to say ; and I always like to be in my best and happiest mood when I am writing to you. So please do not think it unkind of me to have delayed so long.

The situation had its humorous side, too, I must say. Perhaps you don't know what it is to fall ill in a lodging-house. You have to do everything yourself, when, perhaps, you are too ill to do anything. There is no one else to help you. So it was with me, and while I lay in bed, unable to stir, in high fever, I should have given anything

EARLY POEMS

to have some book to read, to divert my thoughts into a brighter channel. There was a Sophocles on the table—but, alas, a few inches out of my reach! and I had to spend many hours wishing it was a few inches nearer, and not a little amused that one's happiness should depend (oh, irony of fate!) on the distance of a few inches. At last, to my joy, my brother came to see me, who, as you know, is a very matter-of-fact person, with a purely commercial mind, a person who looks at everything from a business point of view. And he began comforting me very cheerfully with the reflection that everybody must die some day, remarking how conveniently near the cemetery was, (Kemsford Gardens, I must tell you, looks out upon Brompton Cemetery and funerals pass down it every day) and hoping that undertakers did not charge very high, as he had nearly come to the end of his last remittance.

However I have done one good thing—I have read a good portion of Sophocles' "*Ajax*". It is very beautiful indeed; so fine that one is almost tempted to say that it is the best of all Sophocles' plays; but this is the impression given by every one of Sophocles' plays, not the *Ajax* alone.

End of the letter missing

28 Kemsford Gardens
Earl's Court,
April 8th 1890.

My dear Laurence,

I remember what meagre scrawls I used to write to you last Vacation; so I am determined you shall have one real letter from me this time, and have begun writing betimes. I am also able to send you a little thing I have written lately—I hardly know what to call it. The conception is pretty, I think; I wished to picture in this poem, how a tranquil, self-centered nature would feel under the influence of passions. But as I am myself anything but tranquil, and self-centred, I don't know how I have succeeded. Please tell me how you like it, and make any suggestions that you think worth while. It is not perfect, I know: but lyrics never are so, as first written, although that is the

LETTERS

common opinion ; they want as much time and labour to perfect them, as any other kind of poetry. I also send you two stanzas of my ode, the Greek ode, if you remember, which I told you I intended to write. You see, I have been pretty industrious of late. These stanzas admit of much polishing ; I send them to you, just written, as they are, because I am anxious to know how they strike you.

My purpose, in writing this Ode on Matthew's death, was to throw into form, as nearly as possible, my idea of those beautiful lost compositions, the *θρῆνοι*, of Simonides and Pindar. The "*Danae*", which you admire so much, is a fragment, an exquisite fragment, of one of these. Simonides seems to have excelled Pindar in his *θρῆνοι* just as Pindar excelled him in his *εὐπύλικια*. The Greeks esteemed him most of all their poets for his "sweetness" and his "lacrimae", qualities best fitted for writing the "Dirge" ; and so, when they sought a poet to write them an elegy over the man who had fallen at Salamis, Simonides ode was chosen in preference to that of Aeschylus to be sung on that occasion. It is the fragments of Simonides I have most studied in preparation for my Ode. I fear what may seem the only too courageous commonplaces, with which the Ode opens will prove a stumbling-block to many. But I confess I am not ashamed to utter sentiments which the Greeks considered so important, that they repeat them more than any others, provided only I can say them half as beautifully as they did. What many people, crazed by modern notions of originality, would call common-place ideas (occurring everywhere in Greek plays and poems) I should call ideas showing a fine sanity ; a sanity different indeed from our vaunted metaphysics, those unsubstantial mists of verbiage ; These people do not see that we want continually to be brought back to the broad simple facts of life. However, as you will see, I have given a thoroughly modern turn to the thought, "How brief is life !" by adding the thought, "How mysterious it is !" The second stanza does not please me so well as the first ; and I may recast it, if you think it is too long and is likely to make my Ode have a too bulky beginning. Not that, this is, I think, really the case : for all I say is à propos to what followeth. The argument of the first part is much as follows : "The life of most men is brief and purposeless and full of calamity ; like leaves borne down on a rapid mountain-torrent into the sea. Why mourn for such a life ? But Matthew's life was different, and one worthy of

EARLY POEMS

record. We are surrounded by darkness on every side, and are a mystery to ourselves ; he recognised this and recognised that we must always be so. Yet he knew his own pathway, and shed light upon ours ; taught us not to dream of the impossible nor despair at the unavoidable," and so on.

I fear I am talking at a tedious length about my own concerns. I have not asked, how you fare with your plan for the narrative poem. Have you found a subject ? If I were you, I should not invent the whole plot myself. It is much better, I think, to take some pretty well-known story, or indeed any story from some source or other, and then mould it after your own mind. This has been the case with almost every great poem ever written, whatever people may prate about originality. Have you yet had the proofs from Blackwell ? I have wondered at their being so long in coming. Cotton, I find, has discovered all about our volume. I hope he will give us a review in the Academy. Shall I hint that we should be very glad of one, when I see him next ? But perhaps it would be better to let him offer it himself. Stephen, I suppose, is still at Worthing. When I parted from him, on the night we went to Galton's, he promised to send me a copy of the "*Epic*" which I am simply longing to read. He also wants you and me to jot down on the margin of a copy sent specially for the purpose, any suggestions that occur to us. He says he would like to have the opinion of all kinds of people on the poem, before he publishes it. It was very kind of you to introduce me to Image and Galton and the rest of the Hobby Horse people. I always feel very lonely in London, and I shall be very glad to go there of a Saturday. They were extremely interesting people, I thought ; and I suppose you couldn't hope to meet more sound and enlightened men anywhere. Please write soon ; and don't omit to send anything you may have written. I am looking forward with great expectation to the play in its new form, and to your design of a narrative poem. It is such an age since you have written anything.

Yours affectionately,
M. Ghose.



LETTERS

28, Kempsford Gardens.

Earl's Court. S.

Wednesday, April. 16

My dear Laurence,

I was very pleased to get your letter and the proofs ; you sent me. I am sorry I could not return them before Monday ; but it could not be helped, as they came here the very last thing on Saturday night. I hope my corrections were all right ; and, if not, that you have not scrupled to change them, as you thought best. It is quite a delightful experience to see one's own things in print, don't you think so ? They look so fresh and different that you can hardly persuade yourself that you have written them. I am so glad my verses pleased you so well. They cost me very little trouble, and after I once had the idea I wrote the poem straight down. So I was particularly surprised and pleased when you pronounced it the most perfect thing I have done. I was pleased too that you should think it "free and flowing". I remembered that you thought some of my earlier things defective in this respect and so I was resolved this should be mended in my next attempt. But now, there is one thing I must protest against : and that is the position you take in talking about my poor achievements. What do you mean by saying "I must try to emulate you", and "there is something in this poem I shall never get." It grieves me that you should speak like this. It is really absurd (pardon my saying so) for you with your varied gifts and abundant powers to depreciate yourself in this fashion. It is true, and this much I will confess, that I think, just because your gifts are so rich and abundant, you did not find all at once the right mean, the just proportion ; which is gained much sooner by people of far more limited and inferior talent, like myself. That is because they move within such narrow limits, their powers are so moderate that they very soon learn to wield them. A rich and abundant nature like yours feels, at first, at a loss, in its own richness and abundance. It has to try one thing after another before it knows itself aright, and can strike just the right mean and proportion that suits itself. This is a stage which has been gone through by every fertile genius, and you have done the same. As for me, although I have the liveliest sense of your charming kindness in encouraging me like this and showering on me all this generous praise I have too deep

EARLY POEMS

a consciousness of my own poetry to be unduly elated by such praise ; and too great love and admiration for you to let you depreciate yourself so unjustly. But if my humble verses can help you in any way, can show you at all where to direct your power, believe me, I am only too proud to be of such service to you. When you shall have written, hereafter, some great work which everybody admires, how happy I shall feel in knowing that it has been partly my work ! I believe, with you, that directness and simplicity is the only rule for writing. I have always followed or tried to follow this rule. But you forget that you have done the same in an equal measure. There is, indeed, a difference in the results. " The result with me is lines such as those I sent you—things of a certain lightness and grace, but which people of less wide sympathies than you would call tame and commonplace. But with you the result is lines like these from Persephone

For, where no joyful things is, I have been,

And, what gods loathe to look on, I have seen.

with a power and severity in them all your own, and far beyond my reach.

I have seen a good deal of Image, Galton and the other Hobby Horse people lately. What a kind, charming soul is Image. He has given us the loveliest design of leaves and flowers for the cover of our volume, which I fear he has taken too much time and trouble over. I tried to show him how grateful I feel for his goodness to us. Is not that a bright and happy essay of his, the one which has come out in this last Hobby Horse ? Truly the Hobby Horse people are exquisite writers of prose. Lionel Johnson's poem too is nothing to be despised. It is indeed much after Metthew. But that is a recommendation in my eyes. The Time-Spirit (to use his own phrase) is working for Mathew. At this moment his influence is penetrating the best minds, the purest souls, in England, and those who have not some time or other, undergone this influence, have lost a very real part of that schooling which his own age gives a man, and are sure, as the years go by, to find *

A portion of the letter missing

LETTERS

I have a poem in my head which only requires to be written down. Your sketch of the narrative poem is excellent and you ought to make something out of such a motive as the idea of "*Miser Catulle*. I shall not say anything more about it, as I distrust my judgement altogether when it has to be given on the sketch of a poem. Please write it as soon as possible, while the subject inspires you. I have perfect confidence in the result. With your superior architectonic faculty, the seeming want of incident in the sketch will disappear—it is only an apparent want, probably due to hastily writing down the foreshot you gave me. I am longing to see some stanzas of the poem which no doubt you will send me with your next letter.

Believe me.
Ever your affectionately,
Manmohan Ghose.

28, Kempsford Gardens
Earl's Court S.W.
Friday, April 25th.

My dear Laurence,

Many thanks for your letter, and more for the stanzas. They are indeed beautiful ; and I am glad you sent them, fragmentary as they are ; as I can now see what I was longing to see, the manner in which you meant to treat the subject. Perhaps I don't altogether approve of a descriptive beginning ; but the description is so short, simple, and natural that it at once disarms all objections. What pleased me most of all was its faithfulness, its striking reality ;—I mean its truth to the peculiarities of rural scenery in England. That is what we should all strive at— a closer adherence to reality, to nature ; and the only way to do that is to paint from experience, from the things which we have felt and seen and heard. How I envy you the richness and radiance of your descriptions ! You have so much resource of language—a gift you have perfected by writing such a variety of things ; by real and noble devotion to your art. The rest of the piece is so incomplete, I can't trust myself to form a judgement on it. But the conception is lovely, and well worth the pains you are taking over it. Will you be angry with me for my presumption in

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making one little suggestion ? After that happy touch of description the graceful contrast of the land to the sea, would you not go on to describe the longings of Lancelot, his feelings of glad expectation as he is going to meet his sweet heart ? It seems to me so natural ; at least I am sure that is how I should feel in the same circumstances. Perhaps, however, it would be truer to life to make him beset with a dark foreboding, an unaccountable anticipation of what is coming, stealing across his joy. However, it is perhaps presumptuous and unnecessary for me to make these suggestions as I see, you have left a row of asterisks, intending no doubt to put in something of the kind. I do hope you will find time to go on with this poem at Oxford. I have great expectations as to the last scene, the interview of the lovers.

You will be surprised at not seeing me on Sunday night as usual. But you must not be alarmed ; I am not going back to Oxford, till Tuesday or Wednesday, as I have caught a bad sorethroat from the east wind we have been having, and cannot get rid of it. It is the same thing I had last term at Oxford, and which I have been catching every now and then, all this Vacation. But I am not at all sorry, as I shall probably just miss an exam. in Thucydides for which I am not prepared.

You cannot think how sick and tired I have become of working for Greats. The slavery for it is getting perfectly loathsome. I am sure I shall never bring myself to get up all the Logic and Metaphysics required. Do you know, I have half a mind to leave Oxford after my third year, and come down to London to work for the next vacancy that occurs in the British Museum. I see no earthly reason why I should stay any longer at Oxford. It will be only so much waste of time. A degree is perfectly useless to me, as I don't mean to go in for education and I can now get my "nominations" quite easily without applying to anyone at Oxford. If your aunt can get me recommended through Canon Westcott to some one of the many ecclesiastics who are Trustees of the British Museum I think I can also get recommended through Ilbert to the Speaker of the House of Commons, who is also a Trustee. I can disengage myself from Oxford very easily by simply pleading pecuniary embarrassments. That is another reason why I should leave ; living there is so dear ; and the longer I stay, the deeper I shall be plunged in debts all over the place.

LETTERS

I had tea at your aunt's last Sunday, and then went with Stephen to see the Sharpes. I showed those verses of mine to your aunt : she was very kind, and read the poem herself aloud to Stephen. But though they were pleased, it did not seem to strike them so much as it did yourself ; for you thought it the best thing I had done, did you not ? Whom do you think we met at the Sharpes ?—That person you have criticized so justly in your Gryphon essay—Miss Mathilde Blind. She is neither good-looking nor interesting, but decidedly disagreeable ; with a thin discordant voice, and a manner of looking down on people with an air of sickly compassion, which is highly irritating. Stephen proposed to wait by the roadside and murder her as she went home. But I contented myself with asking her whether she had read the last *Hobby Horse* ; and if not, she would find a beautiful criticism of the ascent of man in an essay there by Laurence Binyon.

Stephen told me he wanted to leave the stage, and get some appointment where he could have more liesure. It certainly is a deplorable thing that Stephen with his genius and intellect, should spend all his time acting. I wish he could have tried for the British Museum, but I fear he is too old, twenty-five being the limit. If he could only get some regular literary work to do he says he would leave the stage at once. But of course, in London, the regular posts are so difficult to get ; people are very willing to fall back on you, but extremely loth to take regular contribution.

When, I wonder, is our volume going to be out ? I suppose Blakwell ought to manage to have it published next week. I am burning to see it out and know what people will think of our productions. Shall soon see you—Au revoir—

Ever yours.
Manmohan Ghose

28, Kampsford Gardens.
Earls's Court
S.W.
May 13th 1890

My dear Laurence

Forgive me for not having written before. I have only just finished my negotiations with the College ; quite without friction, I am happy to tell you : and I can now breathe freely and feel a little more settled.

EARLY POEMS

I am quite aware, though you did not express yourself so to me, that in your secret heart you condemn me for the step I have taken ; and think me , as perhaps I deserve to be thought, very foolish in leaving Oxford. If looked at practically, I confess I was. But then I am incapable of looking at things practically as you know ; and for me, you will admit, it does not matter much from what point of view I look at things. Whatever I do, I can never make anybody particularly happy or unhappy by any course of action I may take. For people less isolated than myself, there is need, in natural concern for how their conduct may affect others, to be circumspect as to what they do. But as I have no serious ties in the world, I feel quite irresponsible. Whatever may come amiss with me, I shall not grieve anybody much by it ; and, certainly, I shall not grieve myself. So I can afford to indulge my own will and pleasure. I feel it necessary to make this little defence, that I may not appear to you altogether unreasonable.

I saw your aunt the other day, and she was very kind indeed about the nomination. If it depended on her, how easily I should get it ! But I do not really see why there should be any difficulty, if only Dr. Westcott feels at all interested in me, on your aunt's recommendation. From official information that I have had from the Civil Service Commissioners, the limits of age, I see is not 18 to 25 as Sharpe told Stephen, but 18 to 30 as was my own impression originally. So Stephen, if he thinks it worth his while, as I should certainly say it was, can still try for the Museum Assistantship. How delightful it would be if all three of us were to get into these posts ! I have not been settled enough yet to think of writing anything. But I have several projects in my head, of which you shall hear, if they come to anything.

Please write and tell me how "Prima Vera" is faring, and send any comments you can. Living the delightful social life you do at Trinity, I know how occupied you are. But when you have time, I should be very glad of a note now and then. Meanwhile excuse this hasty scrawl. Will write more fully very shortly.

Affectionately yours
Manmohan Ghose



LETTERS

28 Kempsford Gardens
South Kensington S.W.
May 27th 1890

My dear Laurence,

You have just anticipated me with your letter this morning ; as I was on the very point of writing. Pray forgive me for this delay in acknowledging your last letter, and the criticisms you sent me. I have been at work on a little poem in the hope of finishing it in time to send you when I wrote. But it is in a difficult metre which requires patience ; besides I have been so unsettled, and had so many things to do. How very charming and kind of you to be so anxious that I should be well reviewed, and so careless of yourself ! What you say is perhaps true ; and Oscar Wilde in his notice of us in the Pall Mall possibly thought something of the kind : and that was why, good soul that he is, he praised me so much, so out of proportion to my merits, and gave me a sort of introduction to the public as well. You, by getting the Newdigate, and Stephen as an actor, are already before the public in other ways ; but I was quite unknown till Oscar's generous notice of me.

I am afraid you must not hope too much from Symonds and the *Academy*. I am sorry it is the *Academy* he wants to review us in. Cotton, my brother says, told him in private that he was very disappointed with "Primavera". Of course it doesn't signify what such a petty and tasteless person thinks of us ; I am only afraid that Cotton would not, after that, allow us much space for mention in the *Academy*.

Who is this Robert Bridges—an undergraduate or connected with Oxford in any way ? It is extremely good of you to be mentioning me to every one like this.

My poor Laurence ! What are you doing to yourself ? You quite alarm me by your description of your restlessness and excitement. These are the symptoms of the social fever : I remember how badly I had it my first term at Oxford. Pray be persuaded by me, and don't keep so much company for awhile ; also, take quiet walks, instead of too violent exercise, and leave off for a time that pernicious Oxford custom of taking so much tea and coffee. Try and get a week or two of perfect quiet, and finish the little lyric you told me of. I am so curious to know what it is like. I shall expect

EARLY POEMS

it in return for the poem I am going to send you. Never mind at all about not writing much to me. I know how irksome it is to be obliged to write when you have no time. I want you to have perfect rest for a short time.

Stephen is at present rehearsing at Terry's theatre, where Terriss is going to play a drama of Augusta Webster's "In a Day", on Friday night. Stephen's part is a stoic philosopher, the slave of a Greek noble in the time of Nero, which is the epoch of the play. The play itself has some fine writing in it, but is not good as a drama.

I am still reading Greek poetry, and am always finding something new to admire. The perennial grace, the charming simplicity of these lyric poets fascinate me more than I can tell; and I read them in the hope of catching what André Chénier calls that. *L'antique et native beauté* which keeps so eternally fresh and young—*rajeunir d'age en age*. Do you know any of the lovely songs of Anacreon? The real Anacreon I mean: for there are a number of better known poems, written much later apparently, which are also called after him. Here is a charming song addressed to a coy maiden, the music of which is most sweet and enthralling.

Πῶλε Ὀρχαία, τί δή με
 λοξὸν ὀμμασιν βλέπουσα
 οὐκ ἐμὲ φεύγεις, δοκίμῃ δέ
 μ' οὐδὲρ εἰδέναι σοφον;

ἴσθι, τοι, καλῶς μὲν ἂν τοι
 τὸν χαλκινὸν ἐμβάλομαι,
 ἥγιά μ' ἔχον στρέφομαι
 σ' ἄμφι τέρματα δρόμου.

νῦν δὲ λειμῶνάς τε βόσκεται
 κοῦφα τε σπιρνῶσα παῖσις.
 δεξιὸν γὰρ ἵπποσιρῆν
 οὐχ ἔχουσ' ἐπεμδαίην.

This little poem has nothing of the force and passion of such a thing as Sappho's φαίνεται μῆτι κηνὸς υἱὸς θεοῖσιν but its grace and feeling are inimitable. Can you find any English words delicate and fine enough to translate λοξὸν ὀμμασιν βλέπουσα? Tenderness, exquisite

LETTERS

tenderness is Anacreon's most beautiful characteristic ; as in these lines, the beginning of a poem to a boy.

ὦ παῖ, παρθένιον βλίπων,
 δίζημαί σε, σὸ δ' οὐ ποῖς,
 οὐκ εἰδὼς, ὅτι τῇ ἐμῇ
 φυλῇ ἡνιυχεύεις.

And perhaps the sorrow of the Greek mind at the prospect of death has never been so sadly and wistfully expressed as in this perfect song.

Πολιοὶ μὲν ἡμῖν ἤδη
 κρῆταφοι κάρη τε λευκόν,
 χαρίεσσα δ' οὐκ ἔθ' ἡβη
 πάρα, γηράλαιοι δ' ὀδόντις.

γλυκεροῦ δ' οὐκ ἔτι πολλοῖς
 βιότου χρόνος λείλειπται·
 διὰ ταῦτ' ἀνασταλύνει
 θομὰ Τάρταρον δεδοικώς.

Ἄϊδεω γάρ ἐστι δεινός
 κυχός, ἀργαλὴν εἴς ἐς αὐτόν
 καθυδός, καὶ γὰρ ἐτοῖμοι
 καταβάντι μὴ ἀναβῆναι.

Really, when one comes to think of it, there is nothing in the world to surpass these things. I cannot sufficiently admire the rhythm of this piece ; it has such lightness, yet there is about it such a sad haunting melody. But what takes me most are the fine, real touches. What English poet but would be afraid of being grotesque in saying γηραλαιοι δ' ὀδόντε ? Yet how vividly it brings before us Anacreon in his extreme old age !

I could go on descanting forever on the merits of these exquisite, half-forgotten, and wholly neglected poets. But I must stop ; for I want you to get this letter the first thing tomorrow morning.

Believe me
 Affectionately yours
 Manmohan Ghose.



EARLY POEMS

28 Kempsford Gardens
South Kensington.

S. W.

June

My dear Laurence,

The clergyman whom you wrote of as going to visit me came the other day ; unfortunately I was out, but he has left his card, and I shall of course return the call. As to your apprehension that it would bore me, you are quite wrong ; I am glad to make any fresh acquaintance, I know so few people in London.

I went to dine the other day with Horne. Horne and Ernest Rhys had intended to concoct between them a review of "*Primavera*" for the Pall Mall. The editor of the P.M.G. had scarcely promised to take Rhy's notice, when he again told him that he had made a mistake, and had already allotted the notice of our poems to somebody else. Of course this somebody was Oscar, who had sent in his notice afterwards, and of course the P.M.G. was glad to take anything Oscar sent.

Many thanks for *Persephone*. It is a beautiful poem, indeed the most perfect of your narratives. I cannot enough admire the skill and ease with which you treat so difficult a metre ; difficult because it would be hard, I should imagine, to sustain yourself long at a high level in such a measure.

I am so glad to learn that my alarm about you was unfounded : but still you mustn't be angry with me for still having my suspicions that you are not well. I shall ask Stephen, when I see him next, how you are looking.

There is one thing I should like to ask you about. Would you kindly send me four more copies of *Primavera*. I shall buy them of course, since I am not entitled, I suppose, to any more than were sent me. But as I am expecting money from Oxford and am out of pocket just now, may I task your kindness to get them for me ? I want to send one to Lord Ripon ; both as a good and grateful patriot ; and because he is a man who in an emergency would be of the greatest use to me. He is a generous man, and an unfailing friend of Indians. The others I want for other distinguished people connected with India. It is good to sow broadcast, as I don't know whose influence I may not need hereafter.

LETTERS

Would you also mind giving my brother a copy, with your name and Cripps' inscribed on it in your own handwriting ?

I send you the poem I promised. I ought perhaps to apologise for the strange metre in which it is written. But, believe me, it is from no private eccentricity or crotchet of my own : least of all from any servile attempt to imitate an impossible classical measure. But one can't help, I think, feeling the want in English poetry of freer and subtler rhythms ; and it is from a very laudable desire to supply this want that I chose this peculiar measure ; a slight adaptation, as you will see, of the Sapphic stanza. For the dactyl instead of being in the third foot is transposed to the first ; the other feet being, as in the Sapphic all trochees. This rhythm was suggested by a beautiful piece of music to which Horace's Ode "*Integer vitæ scelerisque purus*" had been set and sung by a choir of boys ; and which I heard long ago in Manchester. The transposition of the dactyl makes the caesura fall at the end of the second foot, which gives a lovely pause. But as this used always would be monotonous I have varied it by throwing the accent back or forwards, or in some lines making the second foot also a dactyl. This is the type of line (varied as I have said in different ways).

Beautifŭl, | dĭstănt || ăs ă | stăr shě | smiles dŏwn
though the pause is always in the same place. There are one or two more stanzas wanting to complete the poem ; but I am impatient to know what you think of this new venture. Even if you don't like the metre, I hope the poem itself will please you. I have taken considerable pains over it.

Pray be sure to finish and send me the lyric, which I am so anxious to see. I shall be very disappointed if it doesn't come with your next letter. Also kindly send me the "Primaveras" as soon as possible.

Believe me
Affectionately yours
Manmohan Ghose

28 Kemsford Gardens
South Kensington S.W.
July, 13th 1890.

My dear Laurence,

I was very much grieved to miss you when you called ; but much charmed with the beautifully-bound "Primavera", which you left

EARLY POEMS

for me. I am sorry you found no time to come again ; but when you revisit London, as you have promised, I hope I shall be more fortunate, and see you oftener. Many thanks for your nice long letter : I did not answer it, because I thought I should see you so soon ; when I could tell you how much I liked the verses you sent me. The poem is very charming in idea, and the execution quite worthy of you. It pleased me much, though, I confess, I should like to see you descend sometimes from the calm heights which you inhabit, and write something inspired with more passion and *ordinary human nature* ! This, however, is not criticism ; it is only a personal wish.

. . .

Wednesday.

Your letter came yesterday ; for which many thanks. Stephen and I were intending to go and see you at Fitzroy Street on Monday ; but I was so ill with a headache I was unable to come.

My dear Laurence ! what do you mean by these strange and unreasonable entreaties that I should go back to Oxford ? If you knew how I loathe the place, and how unhappy I was there, you would not be so anxious to have me back. You bid me think of my friends. You know very well that, except yourself, I had no friends to speak of at Oxford. And surely, since you are so happy among your Oxford friends and so occupied with them, it cannot be such an important matter to you whether I am there or not. I do not see in what lie the great advantages of a degree ; which is the only reasonable argument you can urge. People in London tell me it is a very valueless thing, unless you are intending to go in for education. Men who come down from Oxford with degrees find just the same difficulty in getting employment, as those who come without. If you are afraid for my future fortunes, pray set your mind at rest. I have perfect confidence in myself and my own lucky star. The secret of success is boldness ; impudence, if you like ; and the pen is a weapon of inconceivable power. These are my principles of action, which I never forget. And they have stood me in good stead. But to be more sober, I really do not think my prospects are so desperate. I have at least succeeded in gaining one valuable friend, since I came to London. Very likely you will have heard from your aunt, that Lord Ripon has been exerting his influence in my favour in the British Museum business. Dean Liddell, who is a trustee of the Museum has also written to the Archbishop of Canterbury on my behalf. So that I have really had

LETTERS

the strongest influence to back me. It is true that Maunde Thompson, the Museum official, took exception to me as not having high enough qualifications and dissuaded me from putting down my name for the Archbishop's nomination list. He also tried to discourage me from trying at all at the Museum. Part of this is sincere, part official jealousy. It is true that very clever people try for the Museum posts, and I need a year or two more of work before I can compete with a chance of success. Also it is true that getting on the nomination list does not mean being nominated. For the three Principal Trustees have each a long nomination list, and when a vacancy falls open they meet and agree between themselves to nominate three or four of the best qualified men, for competition. But what with Lord Ripon's recommendation, Dr. Westcott's, and, best of all, Dean Liddell's, I have a fair chance of nomination after a year or two of work. I intend to do some tutoring work, and writing, in the meantime which will give me enough to live on, with a little help from my brothers; and will give me time to work up a number of subjects, like German, French, Elementary Mathematics and English History—so as to be ready for any Exam. I may wish to go in for, whether at the Museum or elsewhere. If I were to go back to Oxford I should lose a full year in doing work which in no way bears on these Civil Service Examinations. I should have the degree, it is true; but little better chance of succeeding at the Museum than I have now, and a whole year lost in the meantime.

Believe me, I am acting with a clear insight into my own situation. I know you mean kindly in wishing me to go back to Oxford; but your point of view is a mistaken one. You have apparently not heard all that has been happening to me lately. You did not acknowledge my last letter, if you remember, for at least a month; and I have not seen you to tell all that has happened in the meantime. I am afraid I have explained my position in a very confused way; but I write in great haste. I am building much on my acquaintance with the Marquis of Ripon. He seems really interested in me, and wishful to help me. He is besides a noble and generous soul; and a man, for whom as one of the most pronounced friends of India, I entertain little less than adoration.

Forgive this hasty and most uninteresting letter. You have yourself compelled me to write it; but I hope you will see that you

EARLY POEMS

are wrong in wishing me to go back to Oxford. If you had read all my correspondence with the College, you would confess that it would be a piece of the maddest and most ignoble repentance after I have so finally and decisively refused the increase of Scholarship offered me by the College. I hope to write again very soon, and talk about more interesting things than cursed business matters—

Believe me, my dear Laurence,
Affectionately yours,
Manmohan Ghose.

• • •
28, Kempsford Garden;
South Kensington
4th August, 1890.

My dear Laurence,

I was so glad to get your letter. I meant to have written before, as my last was no letter; but you have anticipated me. I think you have not yet understood my real feelings about Oxford. Even yet (though it is so late) I should if I had another offer from the College, think twice before I refused it. But you see, I cannot ask to be taken back; it would seem both silly and undignified, after such a definite refusal as I gave them. And now that I have wasted a term and the Long Vacation, it is not likely, even if I pressed for it indirectly, that they would make a second offer. It is true I have met with many disappointments and have had many hopes of an opening somewhere rudely thwarted; and it is but natural I should begin to feel a little discouraged. But I am tolerably brave and hopeful, and now my best course, I feel sure, is to keep firmly to my choice, and wait and be watchful.

I have been to see Oscar Wilde lately. Oscar was as charming and affectionate as ever. From the warmth with which he greets me, and from what he told Stephen, Oscar appears to have taken a great liking to me. His notice of me in the Pall Mall shows that, I think. And when I went to see him the other day, he was most kind and affectionate. He upbraided me much for not coming to see him before, and when he heard that I had been going about vainly in search of employment, was very anxious to do something for me.

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He wished to write to several editors and get me some reviewing work to do. It was too late to get a holiday tutorship or else he would have done that for me. He was quite charmed with my design for a short Indian tale. "I should advise you," he said "to make a bold bid for the public favour. With your beautiful English and your Oriental name you ought to strike people's fancy. Write this tale, and make it rich, striking and concentrated and send it to me : I will get it into the Quarterly Review or some other Magazine for you. I am going to France for a week or so, and then we shall be able to take counsel together and carry out our little plans. I hope to see much more of you then." This is very generous and charming of him, is it not ? If he likes, Oscar can prove a most useful friend ; for he knows almost everybody. Mrs Wilde, too, is well-connected and moves in very high circles ; so that, as regards private influence and all that that can do for me, I am as well placed as I could be. But Oscar advises me to write my tale first ; and then he will be in a better position to recommend me for employment, when he can speak of me as the author of a clever tale and a deserving young man : otherwise, he says, it is so like asking a favour.

My dear Laurence, I did not think you would take my little comment on your poem so seriously ; else I should not have made it. I did not say the verses are cold. You are never that ; you are much too true a poet to be that. On the contrary there is a beautiful sweetness and tenderness in all you write. But why do you wish so much to come to such a state of self-content, as to be able

To exact no joy from any hour
Nor love from any friend.

An unenviable state surely. For how much of love can you feel without longing ? Not much, I think. At least it is only a few rare and beautiful souls, who are rich enough in themselves to afford to give without asking to receive back again ; and these are never poets.

Forgive me for saying so, but I think this is a fault in your nature. Your friends notice it in you, and have sometimes said to me they think you rather cold-blooded. It is not that I am sure. I know what exquisite kindness and tenderness you are capable of. But even your aunt, who loves you, I know, as much as her own children, complains sometimes how strangely calm and undemonstrative you are. And being so divinely warm-hearted and sympathetic, I do

EARLY POEMS

not wonder that she should complain. She has often said to me, how much she should like to get behind that calm exterior of yours, and find the real Laurence ; and I have answered she would find the real Laurence a very true and beautiful thing. But even I am sometimes inclined to look upon you as a kind of Ariel, a beautiful spirit indeed, but hardly human ; without that "relish of passion", that frailty which is "the touch of nature making the whole world kin". You treat all your friends with such impartial kindness ; charming indeed but a little distant ; that it makes me wish you would show preference to somebody ; I know it would not be myself, so I say this quite disinterestedly ; that you could show at least some touch of passion to make us feel you are one of us.

Forgive me for being so frank with you ; I cannot hide my feelings. It is the one thing I could never do, nor even should wish to do. You must not let your aunt know, I have disclosed what she said to me ; it is almost a break of confidence, I fear. I only hope you will not be offended with what I have said.

You ask me to send you some poetry. I have almost finished the "Garden" poem, but I shall not send it till it is complete ; I want to make you confess that I have overcome the difficulty of structure and that it is a perfect whole. But I have written three more stanzas of the Elegiac Ode on Matthew, which I send ; you must tell me how you like them. The point of introducing the Orpheus episode is justified in the sixth stanza, the answer of Zeus : so you must not think I have dragged in the thing unnecessarily. I shall not write another poem now till I have finished my Indian tale.

Believe me,
Affectionately yours,
Manmohan Ghose.

P.S. I quite agree with your opinion of the Hoby Horse criticism. Altho' so graceful and charming, it smacks too much of the polite depreciation so characteristic of the Magazine to please one. What do you think of Image's poems in this number ? Why do you address me as M. Ghose, Esq. Pray call me by my full name. Don't you know that it is considered horribly Philistine and common among literary and artistic people in London to address by initials.

LETTERS

Even tradesmen urging me to pay my bills address me in full as if I were a person of distinction.

ELEGIAC ODE

Upon the Death of Matthew Arnold.

strophe Brief is the life of Man,
 His days, a hurrying stream
Of blind desires and actions impotent,
 Waters of powerful Destiny,
 Leave him a little span .
On their mysterious breast to dream :
 Then stern, not answering
 His eager questioning
Of what this vain laborious voyage meant,
They bear him, weeping, out into the boundless sea.

antistrophe O wherefore ask a lay
 For the lost dead, my soul ?
For one more voyager to the ignorant goal
 Of that tempestuous torrent borne !
 When such is all our fate
 Though good, or beautiful, or great :
And me who strike the mournful lyre today
Soon, soon some sweeter lyre shall mourn.
 What man set free by death,
 Eased of his idle breath,
Would'st thou my idler tears should steep ?
O hush, it is no human tears are shed
Today ; to-day is sunk no common head :
Dumb in their choir today, the heavenly Muses weep.

epode A voice is gone from us
 A bard's celestial voice
Mute is the solemn lyre we lov'd so well,
 The lyre that made our hearts rejoice.
Arnold is dead ! What mourning shall be made ?
What dirge shall e'er suffice, what garland grace ?

EARLY POEMS

What songs of wood-birds amorous
 Heard where his tomb is laid ;
 Peace, he belongs to an immortal race,
 Far lifted all our serrows o'er ;
 The race of glorious bards, who dwell
 On earth forever more.

strophe Such was the high decree
 Zeus, Sovran Father, made
 Mov'd by his child, the lovely Muse's tears
 The Muse's tears for Orphens' fate :
 When, sobbing on his knee,
 Nine days uncomforted she pray'd.
 Nine days the golden halls
 Are hush'd : at evè there falls
 No music on the heavenly feasters' ears.
 Apart, in anger mute, the dark-hair'd Sister sate.

antistrophe And still his daughter dear
 Prayed to the Thunderer there :
 "Father, I go not till thou grant my prayer,
 O give back Orpheus to my sight ;
 Orpheus my son, whose lyre
 Stirr'd all things earthly with desire :
 Whom the blue ocean lov'd, and paus'd to hear,
 The Nymphs, the woods, the fishes bright :
 Who to the nightingales
 Was dearer than green dales,
 Dearer to Ossa than her snow.
 Ah pitiless Gods, your hearts are steel indeed !
 See the world weeps ; Even stones his dying heed
 Even rocks lament ; and men their their grand bereavement
 know !"

P.S. This is as much I have done. You will see that the poem is constructed in the severe manner of the Greek dithyrambic poets and of Gray not like those loose formless things, (like Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality*) which modern poets dignify with the name of odes. Severity, I am convinced is essential to perfection of form.



LETTERS

28, Kempsford Gardens,
South Kensington
S.W.

August 28th, 1890.

My dear Laurence,

I am sorry not to have answered your long letter before this. Pray forgive me. I am not at all offended. Why should I be? From the tone of your letter, it was yourself I should suspect, who took offence at my frank, but warm and well-meant criticism on your character. But let us pursue the matter no further. There comes into my head a saying of Goethe's, "Let a man write what he will, he will only succeed in revealing his own personality." Here have we been writing to one another, arguing about the nature of such a mystery as Love : and we are farther off from convincing each other than before. We have only succeeded in revealing each his own personality. What is truth to you is not truth to me ; but still there is no reason why it should not be truth all the same. Henceforth I will not attempt to impugn the truth or rightness of your way of thinking. Let us each think in his own way. Let me only say that your application of the commercial spirit of the age to our way of looking at Love, seems to me very fanciful and absurd. It is a piece of pure sophistry, believe me.

People who love don't *expect* to be loved in return. That is not the nature of love, not even with us *ordinary* people, whom you despise so and call commercial because we cannot soar to such heights of abstraction as you. We implore, entreat, exert all our charm and fascination to be loved in return ; but not *expect*, coldly *expect* ! You ought at least to be just to us ; even if you think differently from us.

I sent on your letter to Stephen. He is going to write to you, he tells me : indeed, I believe he has written already. I fear I have no photograph of myself, and so can't gratify Symonds. I hate photographs, and don't intend to have another taken of myself. I have seen the Church Reformer ; I saw it when it first came out. I like Johnson's notice wonderfully. How I admire that man's extraordinary culture and learning, and fine critical spirit : but he is a pitiful creature : he has not a grain of native personality, and will never do anything great, though he may much that is useful. All the

EARLY POEMS

Hobby Horse people have the same signal defect ; they are useful people, but very *small* people. I was not best pleased, however, with Image's notice in the Hobby Horse. It shows the absurd incapacity of the Hobby Horse for being generous. "It would be extravagant" he says, "to say that Primavera showed any striking originality." That would be a gratuitous insult, if it were not so glaringly false. Every line that Stephen has written disproves it to any mind, not blinded by the strange self-conceit and unfounded sense of superiority which imbues the Hobby Horse. No more of Image's criticism for me after that!

And so you wont give me the pleasure of seeing the prettiest part of my name on the outside of the letters you send me! Well, do as you like. You have a lovely name—Laurence : I think it is one of the loveliest there are, and it is too great a pleasure not to write it as often as I can. I shall address you always as Laurence Binyon.

You must'nt say anything bad of Oscar. Oscar has taken an immense liking to me ; and now I know him well, I love him very much. He is a wonderful and charming being. You are inclined to think him superficial, I know. You should know him as I do ; and then you would feel what depth and sagacity there is behind his delightful mask of paradox and irony and perversity. Oscar is a wonderful personality ; one of the most wonderful personalities of our age. I admire him immensely.

I send you the 'Garden' poem. I have called it "In the Garden". I wonder what you will think of it ; I shall be greatly interested to know. I should like to send it to Galton ; how he would rave about its luxuriance, and florid style. He would be quite wrong, however. It is one of the best poems I have written. Thanks very much for your criticism on my ode, I am glad it pleases you so well. I want this to reach you as soon as possible ; so I will copy out my poem, and post it immediately.

Ever your affectionate
Manmohan Ghose

P.S. I like the poem you sent me. The metre is excellent, and in saying this I do you more justice than you did me in criticising my

LETTERS

Sapphics. All I dont like is the end—"thou containest" is a great falling off from the fine way it begins ; and will not do as an ending.

28, Kempsford Gardens,
Earl's Court
September 3rd, 1890.

My dear Laurence,

How very beautiful and charming of you to write this long, kind, patient, terribly reasonable and pathetic letter ! You are a dear boy, but too good, far too good for this world of ours. How strangely reasonable you are ! You fill me with wonder. But do you know, although I love you very much, I sometimes think I would love you better, if you were not so perfect. Compared with you I am a coarse creature, full of wild caprices, passions, falsehoods, and inconsistencies. And far from being ashamed of these faults, I consider them a more real, a more characteristic part of me than any of my virtues. I love people with faults. When I see the feet of clay, I feel as if I could embrace a man. I see my own sins imaged in him, and yearn towards him in fellow-feeling. That is my ideal ; a head of gold, a body of bronze, and feet of clay ! Believe me, faults are necessary things. Our virtues are mostly assumed or learnt, our faults are always our own. They represent our original, proper selves. Ah yes ! I love the smell of earth ! How I should like to see you cultivate a few spicy sins, with a racy flavour in them ! Perfection, my dear Laurence, is a dangerous virtue ; we pay for practising it by cooling our warmer feelings, while fanning our admiration. Practise a little inconstancy, a little passion, a little levity ; and I will adore you ! That is the only fault I find in your character and in your poems ; you are too perfect, too reasonable, too sinless, and on that account in danger of being a little *cold* ! This may appear to you but wild wisdom. Ah ! but it is wisdom, and you will discover that some day !

How dreadful of you to rake up colourless, sayings and ideas of mine written years, which seem ages, ago ! So powerfully has my personality developed since then. And it will change still, and develop far more, I feel sure. A few years hence I shall hardly know my present self. Those words of mine you quote have absolutely no meaning to me now. They are quite without significance. Love,

EARLY POEMS

passion is the star of my sky. It is the one near, real thing to me. Indeed, now I look back upon my life, it has been the sole star of my existence. Mine is a wonderfully romantic temperament ; absurdly romantic, you will think. I wish sometimes it were not so. I am filled with one wild, insane passion, the hunger for beauty. Beauty—what is it, and why has it such a fearful fascination for me ? Why am I so much at the mercy of the mere smiles and looks of lovely human beings ? Why these fiery convulsions, these delicious agonies, in the presence of one I love ? And there was never a time when I was not in love. I readily plead guilty to the charge of inconstancy. I always loved the most beautiful thing I knew. And if one passion has been destroyed by a stronger and more fiery passion, I am not to blame for that. What anguish one suffers in the process ! Ah ! Laurence, Laurence, life has been a wonderful and terrible thing to me. You can have no idea of it, you, who have been brought up in a region of family restraints, like a nun in the seclusion of her cloisters. I have been free from a boy, dreadfully free and lonely. I have had wild adorations ; and I know that in the future I shall have still wilder, still more passionate ones. Never before have I been throbbing so with the strange desires, the exquisite temptations of youth. Yes, I have had wild adorations. And there have been people too, girls, who have adored me—(One knows only too well when people are in love with us, and when not) but for whom I did not care a bit in reality, to whom I cooled very soon ; to whom I was strangely cruel and indifferent. Yes, love is a wonderful mystery. How ridiculous it appears when we are not touched by it ourselves. But I too have suffered and that far more often than I made others suffer ; it was more natural, with my keen sensibilities. But yet, to drink experience to the dregs, one must see both sides of Passion ; the two faces of that marvellous shield, the cruel face of steel, and the face of burning gold. One must hate and be loved ; as well as love and be hated : one must inflict and take a cruel joy in inflicting, before one can accept suffering better, not be so surprised at the repulse or indifference with which our affections are treated. I often think beauty was invented simply to make me wildly happy and wildly unhappy.

Why have I run into these singular confessions of my deepest feelings and most secret experience ? How many letters I have written

LETTERS

to you, and yet I don't think you have seen me much in any but my intellectual character. Your strange reserve has always restrained me from expressing myself. But now in your last letter I think I see a breaking of the ice, a little touch of simple candour. You have not been afraid to show a little of yourself to me. That is right. Do you wish to call me a friend? Show a little trust in me. What meaning is there in friendship, if we cannot trust each other with our inner thoughts, those thoughts that we hide from the rest of the world?

I am infinitely relieved and overjoyed to hear that you are not in danger of settling down into the Hobby Horse set. I was afraid you were, and so was Stephen. I did not wish to say anything unkind of them, however. They have been very friendly to us, as you say. But I was criticising them from another point of view—my opinion of them as men of letters. What irritates me is their absurd insistence on rules and principles in art. Art cannot be justified on principles. They begin quite at the wrong end. Principles, and those very broad and general ones, may be deduced from works of art; but even then I don't see that they are much good. In the end every artist has his own way of working; his rules and principles are already mapped out in his own nature. Altogether the Hobby Horse critics seem to me very abstract and arbitrary people. They would be the death of originality, if they had their own way, and the world chose them as literary censors.

I am glad you like my poem. I was sure you would; you have always such a wide, generous and sympathetic appreciation of everything. And now why don't you also send me something, some longer and stronger flight of imagination, not the slight, short things you have been writing lately?

If Mahomed Shah Din is still in London, ask him to come and see me; But stay; I think you gave me his London address: I will write and ask him myself.

I should like very much, if you would draw me. The portrait you made of me some years ago, I sent to my father in India. But I think I have improved in looks since then, and will be a more pleasant subject for you than formerly.

When are you coming to London again? I am sorry this letter has been delayed so long; I meant to have posted it long ago.

Believe me
Ever your affectionate friend
Manmohan Ghose.



EARLY POEMS

28 Kempsford Gardens
South Kensington
London
September, 1890

My dear Laurence,

It was very bad of me not to have given your long delightful letter an earlier acknowledgement. But do you know, you bored me just a little. Why are you so fond of arguing? It is not such a fascinating sin. Argument is a very general resource of unintellectual people, when they don't know how to be interesting to one another. You and I should be quite above such a thing. Our letters should be delightful exchanges of our thoughts, interesting monuments of our daily moods, mad or bad, romantic or intellectual. But they should never be attempts to convert each other to our own opinions. I resent your attempts to reform me. I had no such intentions upon you, and you do me injustice to hint it. I want you to be just what you are. Be what you are, and you are what you ought to be; and for that reason infinitely interesting, natural, and delightful. It is only the attempt to reform people, that spoils them. Ah, what an absurd mistake it is! "The Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots!" And if we should whiten the Ethiopian into marble, or paint the leopard into a meek resemblance of his fleecy prey, we should be sorry for it. We should feel that we were raising sacrilegious hands against the work of that beautiful artist, Nature; that we were changing the world's picturesque variety into a dull and most unnatural uniformity. So it is in what are called moral matters. I look upon life from an entirely artistic point of view. Badness is a colour as distinct as goodness. Both types should be preserved and encouraged. It is only the colourless which offends my eye, the colourless and the formless. The colourless Puritan, who is neither good nor bad, who has neither saintly aspirations nor monstrous desires, but is only bad enough not to be good, and good enough not to be bad; or the formless bourgeois, whose vulgarity is so inherent that not all his aping will bring him nearer to the born aristocrat, the unconscious master of manners, who knows by nature how to put all his actions into a beautiful form. There, my dear Laurence, is a bit of genuine philosophy. And now, will you be a dear boy and tolerate my wickedness, just as I tolerate your goodness?

LETTERS

But candidly, I am not wicked ; I am too contemplative ever to be that. I am an *artist* ; and no artist, no born artist, has ever been really wicked, and it is a want of a proper share of the artistic nature that have made some poets (Byron, for instance, or Alfred de Musset) take to immorality, to make up the deficiency. The reason, I think is that art itself is only another form of immorality. The Philistines are right. The artistic nature is a monstrous thing. It is all wrong, this absurd romance of ours, this insane passion for beauty. We ought not to exist in their present scheme of things, this rule of Philistine routine, of commerce and of gross utility. But in the right sense of the word *the artist is neither moral nor immoral*. He is too much absorbed in his passion for beauty. Morality and immorality become simply objects of contemplation to him, forms of life to be put into his works to give him contrasts of light and colour. I am not bad ; at least not worse than Stephen ; and neither of us are really bad. We only seem so in contrast with you. I must confess, however, that it is quite incomprehensible to me that you should be what you seem. Do you aspire to be another "*Matthew*", or why do I see in you these fits of puritanical gloom ? But your name is not Matthew, and you have no right to "sit at the receipt of custom", or conform with the Hebraists. Your name is Laurence, a beautiful pagan name, or at least of pagan origin : and you should be pagan and nothing else ; like Stephen, that adorable and wonderful being, and like my own poor self.

However, my space becomes limited ; for I wish to send you the beginning of a story I am writing, an Indian story with the charming title of "*Prince Pomegranate*". Tell me how you like the style of it. I value it extremely highly. Don't call it prose ; it is far too beautiful for prose, I am sure. It is imperfectly finished towards the end, which you must excuse.

Ever your own and affectionate
Manmohan Ghose.

Send me some of those poems which you say you have written. I will go and see Mohamed Shafi. But I am dreadfully busy with my story just now, and rather unwell also.



EARLY POEMS

28 Kempsford Gardens
Earl's Court
Oct. 26th

My dear Laurence,

Will you ever forgive me for my dreadful pre-occupation in not writing for such a time—it seems half a century. I am so sorry. But it *was* pre-occupation, and of a kind that you will forgive, I know. I have become terribly absorbed in "Prince Pomegranate", my wild and beautiful eastern romance. It has fascinated me more than I can tell you. The first book is finished. I am dividing it into books ; chapters are so commonplace. And I purpose sending the fragment for your inspection this week, as soon as ever I have it copied out. I am so glad you liked the bit I sent you. You have done me ample justice, like your own generous self, despite your aversion to the Asiatic style. But you must confess that such a style is suitable to my subject ; and any other would be out of place, besides failing to give the necessary richness and colour. But as a matter of fact the artist has no choice of style left him, when he has once conceived his subject ; the subject suggests the style.

You ask me what is the plot. That I cannot tell you : or, rather, I will not ; for fear of giving you a bad impression of what it is going to be. I have a ground work for the tale, an imperfect outline only founded on broken memories of one of those romantic tales which Indian nurses tell the children—stories as ancient as the wise and wonderful race which conceived them. But it will be a pleasanter surprise to you, if I tell you nothing about my plan.

I should have spoken first of your poem. I will not say it disappointed me. Everything that comes from your hand must be charming. The Graces will never forsake so beautiful a spirit as yours. But you have grave faults to guard against. Did it never strike you, "mon cher Camarade", when you read over this poem to yourself, that it is a little difficult to understand ? That is a fault I am always noticing in you, you tend to be a little impalpable. Even in your beautiful poem "Youth" I seem to feel the same desire ; the wish that your thoughts were a little more clear and definite. Ideas in poetry, it seems to me, should be at once beautiful, simple, and profound. You will find that this is always the case in the highest poetry. By beautiful I mean that they should address the *soul*, not the mere reason, as ideas do in prose. By simple, that they should slip easily through

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the mind, without the least hitch or impediment, and profound they always are, because they are of eternal, not momentary, interest. It is on the score of simplicity that I blame you. Your aunt and Stephen find the same fault with you. But perhaps it will not matter to you what I say. You do not really care for me, I know. You only look upon me as a valuable mental vase in which to relieve yourself of your desire for intellectual sympathy ; because till lately I have been in closer sympathy with you than any other of your friends. It is quite plain to me ; or else you would not so easily be provoked to anger, the moment I yield to new influences, and dare to differ from you. It is so unreasonable of you. You have helped to form me. And I shall always love you merely for that. But you should not expect me to confine myself for ever to your influence.

However pray do not think I was offended with your letter. Your cruelty charmed beyond measure. There is something of the scorpion in you, Laurence. It is very interesting to study this trait in your character. I must ask you once again to forgive me for not writing before. Shall write again next week. Oblige me with your opinions on "Prince Pomegranate". Farewell, my charming Prince Cruel, and believe me, more than ever.

Your own and affectionate
Manmohan Ghose.

28 Kempsford Gardens,
South Kensington
Nov. 2nd, 1890

My dear Laurence,

Why did I write you such a short and hasty letter, quite unworthy of the beautiful long epistle you sent me ? Forgive me. I was in a bad mood, and wrote hurriedly with the sense of a debt unpaid upon me. But perhaps "Prince Pomegranate" will be a compensation. Have you received the little manuscript book ? I am in a dreadful state of anxiety and fear till I know what you think of it. Be kind to me, and write soon, if only to tell me your impressions. When you have read it, will you send it back to me, please ? It is my only fair copy.

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And now, I wonder what you are thinking of me, after all the naughty things I have said to you. Do you think me lost for ever—morally damned, and relegated to the limbo of the unsaintly? Have you cooled, I wonder, in your liking for me? I have been quite unhappy, thinking of this, for sometime. Johnson was telling me only tonight that he saw you on his visit to Oxford, and that you talked of me with a sad smile. Is that true? But if it was only a smile, there is some comfort for me; however sad it was. For it shows that you still care for me. If you had ceased to care, you would have frowned.

I was very grieved that you did not send me something of yours, that I could sincerely and thoroughly admire. I liked your poem; some lines were lovely, such as

"In childhood, when you seemed but lovely lights
The glorious visitants of silent nights."

But to speak sincerely I thought it obscure, and though I have read it ten times over, I cannot catch the drift perfectly, even yet. You know I should not be able to admire it thoroughly. Why did you send it, when you had so many others written besides? Send me some really beautiful thing of yours; Laurence at his best. I want something that I can praise wildly. I feel a mad desire to praise you and to please you; after I have hurt you so much, and, I fear, estranged you a little. But you still care for me, I know, or else you would have frowned or looked grave, not smiled, when you talked about me.

I have made a new and very devoted friend in your cousin, Harold. What a wonderful being he is! He has a brow like an Emperor's, and those bright cruel eyes of his glow like the lynx's. Full of curious and beautiful thoughts, he is as distinguished and intellectual as Stephen, only in another way. I am growing very fond of him. Indeed all that beautiful family have a wonderful fascination for me. Your aunt I adore. She is more like our own Indian women than the cold marmoreal creatures, who are called by that name in this country; full of warmth and sweetness to others, and of passionate adoration towards her own children; and fascinatingly intellectual, besides. And what a sacrifice of herself she has made for the sake of her children! It touches me even to tears. A beautiful and artistic spirit like hers to chain itself for years to the dullness of household drudgery! What

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a sacrifice ! I really think a devoted mother is the most adorable being we can conceive of ! But her wonderful children are quite worthy of such a sacrifice. How altogether un-English they are ! indeed, unlike any other living type. They belong rather to some rare and exquisite type that has never till now found expression ; and even now, seems dropt by mistake from a nobler world than this.

I wont prolong this letter too much, so that you shall not feel it incumbent on you to write at any great length. Now that you are among your friends, you will require so much time to spend upon them. The absent must always give way to the present ; and perhaps it is right that it should be so. My father writes to me asking for ten copies of "Primavera". Am I entitled to any more ; I wonder ? If you would send me that number I should be infinitely obliged to you. He is pestered by all sorts of people asking for copies, in India. I am quite famous in my own country through our brilliant little success. So that I may expect golden statues to be set up hereafter in my memory, in all the capitals of India, as their representative poet ; Pray send back "Prince Promegranate" as soon as you can, with any remarks or suggestions on the opposite page and your initials to them.

Your affectionate friend

Manmohan Ghose.

28, Kempsford Gardens
Earl's Court S. W.
November 1890

My dear Laurence,

Your kind letter has healed all the ill-feeling I ever had towards you. Pray do not let us talk any more about this wretched quarrel. I begin to wonder, like yourself, what it has all been about. It is too generous of you to ascribe the fault of it entirely to yourself. I fear it is due much more to my hasty moods, my variable temperament. Was I very angry in my last letter ? I have forgotten it. I assure you and feel now nothing but friendship and affection for you. But you were hard and unsympathetic and that was cruel of you. Why did you blame me so ?—I mean in my rich and gorgeous eastern story. Surely it does not merit such treatment ? You worded

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your censure very strongly, and your praise was brief and critically cold. You must not blame me. I don't like blame, however well-meant it is. Have you never felt how tender and jealous of his new-born darling is the soul of the true artist? That angel would have fared ill, I think, who presumed to find defects in the fresh structure of this beautiful earth, the green masterpiece of the world's architect: though, after a little while, when his enthusiasm had cooled down, the grand artist might have been glad perhaps even for mocking Mephistopheles to point out a few defects.

I find in your letter this sentence: I "have long looked up to you as expressing in your poems all those ideas, which we were so enthusiastic for, far better than I; and now so suddenly to hear you rejecting and repudiating them all gave me a sort of shock". Was that all, then? Will you never forgive me for changing my opinions, my ideas about art and life? I have certainly changed. A great revolution of feeling has taken place in me. I feel the absolute impotence of theorizing eternally about art and life—in short of the craze of our worthy friends of the "Hobby Horse". I want to write books not write about them. Let me have *life*, the expression of my own personality and passions; and *thought*, too, but thought, springing from these, not a thing apart from them. I feel the danger there is of becoming a mere abstract thing like our friend Johnson, a creature like Lepidus in Antony and Cleopatra "Who feeds on arts and imitations", an intellectual and moral eunuch, without a touch of that unique and glorious thing, "Personality". But what am I saying? Danger? Alas, the danger is just the other way; I am brimming with youth and passion, sweet and dangerous things; how sweet and dangerous those only know who yield themselves wholly to their crimson fascination!

I have returned, too, to our old admiration to Keats, and Byron, and Shelley—the only gods, surely, to worship! It is these *wonderful* beings of our century, *wonderful*, not merely cultured and graceful like Matthew Arnold and other spirits of our own day—it is the *Personalities* that move, delight, and amaze me.

You, also, I feel sure, are not wholly a votarist of mere culture and cold lifeless art, art without passion or individuality. Be true to your real self; don't try to argue me out of this grander standpoint of viewing things, but show me sympathy.

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I like your little poem the "Autumn Crocus". It has grace and tenderness and form. But I am still looking forward to something larger, stronger and more intense than your pen has lately given us.

The sentences shall be corrected to which you objected in "Prince Pomegranate". You are perhaps right about them, although you expressed yourself more roughly than was amiable.

Believe me to be ever
Your affectionate friend
Manmohan Ghose

. . . 28, Kempsford Gardens
Earl's Court
. Sunday, December 22

My dear Laurence,

Forgive me for not writing before this ; I am so sorry ; but I think you will forgive me when you hear that I have been trying all this while to get something done, both prose and verse, to send you as a Christmas present ; and they were to show how grateful I feel for all your sympathy and kind encouragement. But all I have succeeded in doing are these poor fragments which I enclose with the letter. I am afraid you wont think much of them : but I have been so unsettled with moving here, and so occupied with calling on people, that I really have not been able to concentrate my mind on anything.

Your aunt, I am glad to say, looked much better when I called at Edith Road, last time. She was kind and sympathetic as ever, and was looking quite herself again. So I was all the more grieved to hear lately that she was again poorly. It makes one quite unhappy to think that she should suffer so. But I hope this is nothing, and that she will soon be recovered.

What are you doing now, I wonder ? You have to work very hard, have you not, for your Schools in March. But I hope you will not have to be too deeply immersed in Thucydides or Logic to enjoy yourself and spend a very happy Xmas. And if you find a little time and are inspired I should be so pleased and grateful for any poetry you are able to send me. Poor Poetry ! I am afraid you dont love her so much as you used to do. If she were a person, I could fancy her gazing reproachfully at you—thinking of all the happy days

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which you used to spend at her feet, and now how she is forgotten amid the glow of Oxford life and your imperious duties social and intellectual !

But this is perhaps not an appropriate rebuke—particularly from me. For no one could have wasted his time more recklessly in that respect than I, these last two weeks. For one thing I have been cultivating society more than I usually do. Besides London is so gay and so full of life at this time, that an irresistable spell draws you out of doors. I have seen your brother pretty often and have had very interesting conversations with him. Jack certainly has no want of ideas ; it is a great pleasure to talk with people so widely read as he is.

I also go frequently to see the Cottons. Mrs. Cotton is a most charming woman ; indeed I have never met any one so pleasant, with the exception of your aunt. She is not cultivated, as your aunt is ; but she is so sympathetic, and takes such a bright interest in everything, that you cannot help liking her very much. Cotton too was very affable and lent me quite a number of Greats books, of which I was very much in need. The fussy and amusing little man talked a great deal, as usual, about the Academy, his Oxford days, etc. and very kindly asked me to come any evening and have a chat with him.

However I mean to make a great effort and finish those things for your volume of poems next term. Are you really going to publish next term ? I fear you will have some difficulty in dissuading Stephen from having "*Orestes*" in the scheme. He told me that was the only one of his short poems which he cared for—and it was the only ones he should care to see published.

The fragments of prose I send are a few obvious objections against philosophy (modern philosophy particularly) as an exponent of life—but such is this age of confusion in which we are living, that it is just these simple and obvious truths, I think, which ought most to be brought home to people. Please read them, and tell me whether you think them true—(the style is indifferent, but I can mend that of course).

Wishing you a very happy Christmas,
Yours affectionately
Manmohan Ghose



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55 Elliots Road
Calcutta,
January, 7th 1916

My dear Laurence,

An immense gap, which you must pardon;—perhaps you have already, with your ancient kindness for me, if by any chance you have heard of my grave misfortunes. But first for yourself. How are you? and what are you doing in these dreadful times? Has the war stopped all poetry? or are people still writing?

About three years ago I had a visit—it was a delightful surprise—from R. C. Trevelyan, with a kind message from you. I asked him all about you and learnt with grief that you, too, had your troubles. And of your poetical plans I heard something—as much as a brief conversation of twenty minutes allowed. For many days I was in a state of delighted excitement, and began several times a letter which should reopen our old friendship—but found it difficult to break the ice, and soon fell back into my usual apathetic despondency. And for the sad cause of it all—it is my wife's illness—a strange and mysterious nervous malady with complete loss of speech and of the use of her right limbs. This is combined with psychical and hysteric symptoms, and aversion to all food. Sometimes (once for a whole year) she had to be fed forcibly. It began in 1905 and with a break of two years in which she partially recovered, has continued now for ten years—the whole space between when I last heard from you and the present moment. You cannot imagine the terrible nervous strain, the utter fatigue and despondency of attending such a sufferer, day after day, for so many years. And, with this, the utter friendlessness of life out here. I think I can truly say that for years not a friendly step has crossed my threshold; and for myself, my life has been spent between my lecture room in College and my own doorstep. With English people in India there can be only a nodding acquaintance or official connection, and with Indians my purely English bringing up and breeding puts me out of harmony; *denationalised*—that is their word for me. Enough of my troubles.

Trevelyan told me little about poor Stephen.—perhaps he is not one of his admirers. And now only the other day I saw in the papers

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the sad news of his death—It was a shock to me, remembering as I do with such keen pleasure all the happy times—the happiest in my life—I used to spend with you and him. And May ? what has become of her, she must be in deep trouble from the bereavement.

Do please write and tell me about yourself, and things in general, And write soon—I send on another leaf a little lyric written a short while ago.

With kind regards and best wishes for the New Year.

Your affectionate friend
Manmohan Ghose.

APPENDIX I

Notes on Early Poems

Abbreviations :

Published Poems :

- Pr.=Primavera (Published—1890—2nd edition)
 L.S.E.=Love Songs and Elegies (Published—1898)
 Gar=Garland (Published—1899) . .
 S.L.D.=Songs of Love and Death (Published—1926)

Manuscripts :

- E.P.=Early Poems
 E.P.A.=Early Poems A
 E.P.I., III, V, VI, VII=Early Poems, Volumes I, III, V, VI, VII
 Po,pa=Poem, page

Stanzas and Lines are given in Roman figures and English numerals respectively :

e.g. I,3=Stanza I line 3

I. DIM WITH OUTGROWN FLOWERS SWEET BOYHOOD STRETCHES BEHIND ME :

Sources—Pr, Po III pa 12/E.P.I., Po XVI, pa 16/E.P. Po V., pa 76.

Place and Date of Composition—Started Kensington, Summer 1888, finished Oxford, Winter 1889 (E.P.I.), Christ Church 1890 (E.P.).

Alternative Readings (Line 1)

'Tis my twentieth year, dim now youth stretches behind me.
 (Pr., E.P.).

Dim with outgrown flowers sweet boyhood stretches behind me.
 (E.P.I.).

II. RAYMOND AND IDA :

Sources—Pr, Po VII pa 19/E.P.I., Po XI, pa 12/E.P., Po XI, pa 67, 68, 21, 22.

Place and Date of Composition—Oxford, March 1890 written in Winter, (E.P.I.)/Christ Church, Oxford, Spring 1890(E.P.).

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Alternative Readings :

II,5, ease (E.P./Pr) Soothe(E.P.I.)

IV, 6. against (Pr, E.P.I.)/misting, blotting, blurring(E.P.)

VII, 5. Look up ! how fixed and vacant seem. (Pr)/I am no shadow sweet confess (E.P.I.)/I am no shadow bodiless (E.P.).

VII, 6. Thine eyes ; so deep they dream. (Pr)/Lip to warm lip I press (E.P.I., E.P.).

VIII, 4. Darkness and apathy ! (Pr. E.P.I.) But endless apathy ! (E.P.).

III. OVER THY HEAD IN JOYFUL WANDERINGS :

Sources—Pr, Po IX pa 27/E.P.I. Po VI, pa 7/E.P. Po XX pa 103, 118.

Place and Date of Composition—Begun London Shepherd's Bush, finished, London 1888(E.P.I.)/Shepherd's Bush 1885, Christ Church 1888 (E.P. pa 118) London 1887, Oxford 1888 (E.P.pa 103).

No Alternative Readings :

IV. THOU WHO HAST FOLLOWED FAR WITH EYES OF LOVE :

Sources—Pr, Po XI pa 3/L.S.E. Po XII pa 30/E.P.I. Po IX pa 10/E.P., Po IV pa 147, 75, 76.

Place and Date of Composition—London, Kensington, Cromwell Road, 1888, (E.P.I.) Cromwell Road, London, Spring 1889 (E.P.).

Alternative Readings :

I,2. Te shy and virgin (Pr, E.P.I., E.P.) The rustling virgin (L.S.E.).

II,2. for my heart (Pr. L.S.E., E.P.I.) when my heart (E.P.)

IX,5. wet leaves (Pr. L.S.E. E.P.I.) dead leaves (E.P.).

V. MENTEM MORTALIA TANGUNT :

Sources—Pr/E.P.I., Po VII, pa 7,/E.P., Po VI, pa 52, 51, 50, 49.

Place and Date of Composition—Cromwell Road, November, Kensington, March 1889 (E.P.I.)/and Oxford, Christ Church 1889(E.P.).

Alternative Readings :

X,5. home (Pr. E.P.) world (E.P.I.)

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VI. HEAP RUBY UPON AMETHYST :

Sources—L.S.E. Po I pa 7/E.P.I. Po XII, pa 14/E.P. Po XXIII, pa 80 (version finally selected for L.S.E.) also pa 69, 70.

Place and Date of Composition—Kensington Spring 1891 (E.P.)

No Alternate Readings in the two stanzas selected for L.S.E.

The original idea was probably to write a string of stanzas like the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam of Fitzgerald. In E.P.I. besides the two finally selected stanzas we find three other stanzas which are given below :

Go ring dove seek the happy land
Where dwells my day, my dream, my star
In Shiras or in Samarcand
To Bagdad or to Balsorah.

O me this little pomp of suns
Gone is it like a thought, a blush,
Swifter than horse or hero runs
And Rustum fails and fails Rakush.

I drink the riches of thine eye
I drink and swooning I depart,
Upon my heart the blue hills lie,
The blue seas break upon my heart.

(On pages 69 and 70 E. P. we get the following additional stanzas.)

It was a dim gold orange bower
He slept reposing like a Shah
I stole on tip-toe, while each flower
Seemed to cry ; "Touch me not Zulaikha."

* * * * *

Love is a sultan sad and strange,
And love a silent Ethiop is,
Love is a merchant. Come, exchange
Ruby for ruby, let us kiss.

* * * * *

Spring speaks to summer by the rose
And wave to wave in glimmering hush,
But lips divine silence knows
The dropping look, the burning blush.

* * * * *

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His eyes were diamonds of delight,
His cheeks the pomegranates desire,
Could he but lure me catch me tight
Burnt with a kiss I would expire.

* * * * *

Now from the gilt-domed mosque I slip
Careless of heaven or of hell,
In the false Koran of thy lip
I read, a shuddering infidel.

* * * * *

Idolatry is in our sighs :

O ! were our whispers known in heaven
Angels would tremble. Turn thine eyes
Gulab, they flame, like the unforgiven.

* * * * *

Say, what is love like ? red and sweet
As rubies or as roses are.

Nay, what is love like ? coals of heat
Two bleeding hearts in a scimitar.

VII. GREAT WEALTH ONCE WAS MINE :

Sources—L.S.E. Po II pa 8/E.P.I. Po XXXI, pa 32(Illegible)/E.P. VI, pa 24/E.P.A. pa 5.

Place and Date of Composition—Bankipore, begun January 1896
finished July 1896 (E.P.I.).

Alternative Readings :

I, 3. ocean (L.S.E.), Atlantic (E.P. VI, E.P.A.)

V, 3. bright (L.S.E.), sweet (E.P. VI, E.P.A.)

VI, 3. restless (L.S.E.), invincible (E.P.A., E.P. VI)

IX, 3. the great passing world (E. P. VI) the sweet solemn
world (L.S.E., E.P.A.)

XIII, 2. shone (L.S.E.) was (E.P. VI, E.P.A.).

XIV, 2. Trees, thoughts, flowers (L.S.E., E.P.A.). Brooks and
flowers (E.P. VI).

XIV, 3. wide (L.S.E., E.P.A.) green (E.P. VI)

VIII. HEART, MY HEART SO FOND TO LINGER :

Sources—L.S.E. Po III pa 12/E.P.A. pa 1/E.P.I. Po XXI, pa 20

Place and Date of Composition—Bankipore 16th March 1896

Alternative Readings—Nil

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IX. THE BATHER :

Sources—L.S.E. Po IV pa 14/E.P.I. Po XXXIII, pa 33/E.P. VI, pa 21.

Place and Date of Composition—Calcutta January 1897.

Alternative Readings :

The Bather (Title E.P.I.) Anodyomene (Title E.P. VI)

II, 4. So(L.S.E., E.P.I.) more (E.P. VI)

III, 2. To noble flowers, with shame's false tyranny done (L.S.E., E.P.I.).

To sinless flowers with robes profaning done (E.P. VI)

Line 14. In marriage with enchanted Nature given (L.S.E., E.P.I.).

Kin to the enchanted earth and to mere heaven (.P. VI)

X. KISS OF CUPID :

Sources—L.S.E./E.P.I. Po XLIV, pa 42

Place and Date of Composition—Bankipore, October 8th-9th 1896

Alternative Readings :

IV, 4. hung(L.S.E.) sat(E.P.I.)

XI. SPRING THAT IN GREENEST SHADE :

Sources—L.S.E. Po VI pa 17/E.P.I. Po IV pa 3/E.P. Po XII pa 105.

Place and Date of Composition—London, Bayswater, May 1894 (E.P.I.) Bayswater, June 1894(E.P.).

Alternative Readings :

III, 1 as (L.S.E., E.P.I.) like(E.P.)

XII. THE OROHARD :

Sources—L.S.E. Po VII pa 20/E.P.I. Po XXXV pa 34

Place and Date of Composition—Bankipore February 1896, Calcutta February 1897 (E.P.I.).

Alternative Readings :

IV, 6. breaking (L.S.E.) bursting (E.P.I.)

XIII. WHERE BREATHES WHO BLOOMLESS LEFT THE MEADOWS :

Sources—L.S.E. Po VIII pa 24/E.P.I. Po XXXVI, pa 36/E.P.A., pa 11.

Place and Date of Composition—Calcutta, March 12th, 1897 (E.P.I.)

Alternative Readings—Nil

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XIV. WHISPERING SLEEP :

Sources—L.S.E., Po IX pa 26/E.P.I. Po XXIX pa 28/E.P. pa 78/E.P.A. pa 2.

Place and Date of Composition—Bankipore, August, 1895 (E.P.I.)

Alternative Readings :

I, 1. Are not thy hands of honey, thy gifts of honey-suckle
(L.S.E., E.P., E.P.A.).

Are not thy lips of honey, thy breath of honeysuckle
(E.P.I.).

I, 3. tenderly (L.S.E., E.P.A.) dreamily (E.P.I.) soothingly
(E.P.).

I, 5. Then our anguish dims (L.S.E., E.P.A.) Then each
anguish dims (E.P.) then doth our anguish dim (E.P.I.).

II, 1 O into what sweet land didst thou this hour bewitch me
(L.S.E., E.P.I., E.P.A.).

Into what heavenly land didst thou this hour convey me
(E.P.).

II, 3. my heart's beloved (L.S.E., E.P.I.) our sweetest
Morvyth (E.P.) our best loved Gladys (E.P.A.).

II, 4. Left me and never once turned to regard me (L.S.E.,
E.P.I.). Left us, never once turned to regard us (E.P.,
E.P.A.).

III, 1. Those adorable ways (L.S.E., E.P.I.) those warm
sisterly ways (E.P.A.).

III, 2. Hush weeper (L.S.E., E.P.I. E.P.A.) Cease weeper
(E.P.).

III, 3. rending sobs (L.S.E., E.P., E.P.A.) useless sobs
(E.P.I.).

III, 8. sorrower lay on me (L.S.E., E.P.I., E.P.A.) languidly
drooping on me (E.P.).

XV. THOUGHTS OF A MOTHER :

Sources—L.S.E. Po XI pa 29/E.P.I. Po XXXII. pa 33/E.P.A. pa 3.

Place and Date of Composition—Bankipore, 16th April, 1896
(E.P.I.).

Alternative Readings :

II, 3. beauteous eyes could never be (L.S.E.) beautiful eyes
could never be (E.P.A.) nothing beautiful could be (E.P.I.).

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XVI. THE EXILE :

Sources—L.S.E. Po XIII pa 33/E.P.I. Po XLIII pa 39/E.P. pa 31, 43, 44, 73—incomplete, as stanzas 12-22 and 33-39 seem to have been lost in binding/E.P.V.—incomplete rough draft.

Place and Date of Composition—Cromwell Road, March, 1894.

Hastings, August 1887, Dacca January 1898(E.P.I.). Summer 1887, 1888, 1889. (E.P.).

Alternative Readings :

XI, 2. To my thought (L.S.E.) Do I dream (E.P.I.)

XVI, 4. rushing tears (L.S.E.) coming tears (E.P.I.)

XVII, 1 & 2. Is it you indeed, afflicted shadows.

Is it you from that tremendous space (L.S.E., E.P.I.)

Is it you dead lovers I recognise

Dead and severed from me long ago (E.P.).

XXXVI, 3. Past enchanted regions (L.S.E.)

Past enchanted headlands (E.P.I., E.P.)

XXXVIII, 3. Not a surge, not a blast's resistance (L.S.E., E.P.I.).

Not a ruffle, not a wave's resistance (E.P.)

XXXIX, 3. vast (L.S.E., E.P.I.) wide (E.P.)

XVII. STEPHEN AND MAY :

Sources—L.S.E. Po XIV pa 40 /E.P.I. Po XXXVII pa 36/E.P. VI pa 44/E.P. V pa 7.

Place and Date of Composition—Bankipore, 1896, finished Dacca 1898(E.P.I.), February 1898 (E.P.V.).

Alternative Readings :

I, 7 & 8. What airs of springtime's very home,

What laughing freshness as of foam (L.S.E., E.P.I. E.P. VI)

All sad with sunset and things ceased.

I turn from the resplendent East (E.P.V.)

I, 9 & 10. Make languid all the Eastern day.

I start, I think of Stephen and May (L.S.E., E.P.I.)

But what more gorgeous break of day.

Is this, I think of Stephen and May. (E.P. V & VI)

In Stanza II all lines in L.S.E., E.P.I., tally, but lines 3-10 in E.P.V. differ and are therefore given below :

Names like the wash of Western seas

Full of the foam, full of the breeze,

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I cry out suddenly and through
 The enchanted darkness look for you
 Delightful friends, friends of the soul,
 A million waves between us roll,
 O sunset on my heart shall weigh
 Till I revisit Stephen and May. (E.P.V.)

In E.P. VI Stanza II is incomplete—Only four lines are given :
 Strange voices murmuring to be known
 Eyes that reproach oblivion.
 That half I know, half I fear
 Familiar, Unfamiliar.

XVIII. TO HIS MOTHER :

Sources—Gar pa 61/S.L.D. Pa 34/E.P.I. Po XXX pa 31/Po XXXIV pa 33 (Two versions of the poem are found in E.P.I.)/E.P.V. p. 14.

Place and Date of Composition—Bankipore April 16th, 1896 (E.P.I. pa 33). Calcutta, February 1897, finished, April 21st, 1897 (E.P.I. pa 31).

Alternative Readings :

Line 11. The world's deep charm (Gar, S.L.D.), in the world just warm (E.P.I. Po XXXIV).

Line 12. Tears, terrors, sobbing things, were yet to be (Gar, S.L.D.) Shape, odours, whispering things, were yet to be. (E.P.I.) Tears, splendours, thronging things were yet to be. (E.P.V)

Note :

Poem XXX pa 31 E.P.I. except for the first two lines is quite different from the other three versions. The whole poem is therefore given below,

"Augustest ! Dearest ! whom no thought can trace,
 Name, murmuring out of birth's infinity,
 Mother ! with that well known beloved face
 I cannot speak how grand you seem to me.
 Though now weak with age, so worn with care,
 Your tired lips sweetly smiling at the light
 Passive you sit, with evening in your hair
 And eyes expectant of the coming night.
 I think of you, as that divinity

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At whose strong pangs with stars about me whirled,
Light and the glorious mountains, earth and sea,
Men, trees, birds, flowers, I issued to the world.
About you is that awful sense of birth
The mystery of the majestic earth.

XIX. AN ELEGY :

Source—Gar pa 62/S.L.D. page 35/E.P.I. Po XXV pa 24A/E.P.V.
pa 10.

Place and Date of Composition—Undated, place not mentioned

Alternative Readings :

1, 3. wistful (Gar, E.P.I., S.L.D.) amorous (E.P.V.)

XX. THE LOVER AND PAINTER :

Sources—Gar page 64/S.L.D. pa.36/E.P.I. Po XXII pa 21/E.P.
(rough draft) pa 137, 94, 95, 97, 98, 99. Po XIV/E.P.
VII pa 372 (Note about the concept of poem).

Place and Date of Composition—Begun May 1894, finished September 1896 (place not mentioned).

Alternative Readings :

II, 1. What voice of earth (Gar, S.L.D., E.P.I.) What human voice (E.P.).

III, 3. Deceive time and absence give (Gar, S.L.D., E.P.I.)
Deceive time, distance, envy, give (E.P.).

II, 2. Sun-warm (Gar, S.L.D.) rain-washed (E.P.I.)

Note.—In E.P. VII pa 37 a note is found which may indicate the first idea about the subject as it came to the poet's mind. "An old man, describing to a painter the scene he wishes to have painted, his own love in youth, the moment chosen to be that when he is preparing to confess his love and she stands in silent bashful expectation. The place is a garden, lighted windows of a house, stars coming out and the rich west." Probably two poems were later written, "The Garden Passion" and "The Lover and Painter".

XXI. MYVANWY :

Sources—S.L.D. pa 27/E.P.I. Po XVII pa 16/E.P. pa 26,
25, 24.

Place and Date of Composition—Oxford, Autumn—(Year—ink too faint to be read).



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Alternative Readings :

VI. 3. maiden (S. L. D. E. P. I) wanderer (E. P.).

XXII. MYVANWY IN THE WOODS

Sources—S. L. D. Pa 30, E. P. I, Po III pa 3/E. P. Po XIII
pa 106, 138.

Place and Date of Composition—Bayswater, April 1894 (E. P. I.)

Alternative Readings :

III. 1. bloom (S. L. D., E. P. I.) born (E. P.)

XXIII. LONDON :

Sources—S. L. D. pa 32/E. P. I. Po X pa 11/E. P. Po XXI
pa 55, 56.

Place and Date of Composition—Bayswater, June 1894 (E. P. I)
August, 3rd 1894 (E. P.).

Alternative Readings :

I. 1. Farewell sweetest country (S. L. D., E. P. I.).

Rustic hedges Farewell (E. P.).

I. 4. espouses (S. L. D., E. P. I) imposes (E. P.)

II. 6. happy (S. L. D., E. P. I.) thrilling (E. P.)

XXIV. OLD SWEET QUIET :

Sources—S. L. D. pa. 33/E. P. I, Po XLII pa 39/ E. P. VI pa 35/
E. P. V pa 15/ E. P. A. pa. 5.

Place and Date of Composition—Bankipore, June 23rd, 1896

Alternative Readings :

I. 6. Breaks the smoothed blue sea (S. L. D., E. P. I) Soothes
me the soft sea (E. P. V, E. P. VI) plunges the soft sea
(E. P. A).

I. 7. the peaceful moon (S. L. D., E. P. I.) the trembling moon
(E. P. A., E. P. V). for now the moon (E. P. VI).

II. 6. watching dost thou lean (S. L. D., E. P. I.) watching there
to lean (E. P. V., E. P. VI, E. P. A.).

II. 7. for thou wouldst meet (S. L. D., E. P. I.) for I should meet
(E. P. V., E. P. VI., E. P. A.).

II. 13. No ! (S. L. D., E. P. I.) Oh ! (E. P. V., E. P. VI., E. P. A.).

XXV. HOME THOUGHTS :

Sources—S. L. D. Pa 34/E. P. I. Po XVIII pa 17/ E. P. Po.
XV pa 79.



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Place and Date of Composition—Hastings, Summer, 1887 (E.P.I),
Cromwell Road, Kensington, Summer, 1887 (E. P.).

Alternative Readings : Nil

XXVI. SAPPHICS :

Sources—S. L. D. pa 39/E. P. I. Po VIII pa 9/E. P. pa 148, 147.

Place and Date of Composition—Kempsford Garden, Kensington,
June 1890 (E. P. I.), Kensington, July, 1890 (E. P.).

Alternative Readings :

I. 2. Is it (E. P. I., L. S. D.) it is (E. P.)

IV. 1. passion-poised (S. L. D., E. P. I.) passion-lost (E. P.)

XXVII. BABY :

Sources—S. L. D. pa 146/ E. P. I. Po XXVIII pa 26/E. P. A.
pa 9, 10.

Place and Date of Composition—Bankipore, April 4th-6th 1896
(E. P. I.).

Alternative Readings :

II. 8. Enchantment ! oh art thou not only (L. S. D., E. P. I.),
Baby dear ! are you not only (E. P. A.).

III. 1. so (S. L. D., E. P. I.) child (E. P. A.).

V. 2. With (S. L. D.) And (E. P. I., E. P. A.)

V. 8. No ! (S. L. D.) Nay ! (E. P. I., E. P. A.)

XXVIII. LULLABY :

Sources—S. L. D. pa 148/E. P. I. Po XXIII pa 24/E. P. A. pa 12.

Place and Date of Composition—Bankipore, March 22nd 1896
(E. P. I.).

Alternative Readings :

II. 9. Sunset locking (S. L. D.) Senses locking (E. P. I., E. P. A.)

XXIX. SAY O TRANQUIL HEART :

Sources—E. P. I. Po I pa 1/E. P. Pa. 143, 144.

Place and Date of Composition—Kempsford Garden, Kensington,
May 1890 (E. P. I.).

Alternative Readings : Nil

XXX. BETWEEN THE BLOSSOMED HEDGEROWS :

Sources—E. P. I. Po II pa 2/E. P. Po IX pa 102

Place and Date of Composition—Keswick, July 1886 (E. P. I.)
Keswick midsummer 1886 (E. P.)

Alternative Readings : Nil



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XXXI. THE GARDEN PASSION :

Sources—E.P.I. Po V, pa 5/E.P. pa 102, 101, 65, 66/E.P.VII, rough draft of some stanzas and a note on the conception of the poem on pa 39.

Place and Date of Composition—Begun Oxford, 1889, finished Kempsford Garden, Kensington, July 1890, (E.P.I.) Kensington mid-summer, 1890 (E.P.).

Alternative Readings :

Verse Para III, 6. rapturous (E.P.I) sovran (E.P.)

Verse Para III, 9. passion-eaten (E.P.I) anguished, suppliant (E.P.).

Verse Para IV, 3 & 4. To all his agonies, all his sighs,
What opening sudden paradise (E.P.I.)
(Corresponding lines not found in E.P.)

Verse Para IV, 5. Abandoned to that glorious gaze (E.P.I.)
Lost in the glory of that gaze (E.P.)

Verse Para IV, 6. in sweet dread (E.P.I.)
half in fear (E.P.).

Verse Para IV, 21 & 22. Words that with ravishing music pierce
Each others hearts each other's ears
(E.P.I.)
Speech such as only spirits hear.
In angel-skies forever clear (E.P.)

Note :

"Poem describing in as beautiful detail as possible the lovers, their attitude. At the last moment when he is mustering up his courage to confess his love, she stands with averted face in bashful expectation as a blush comes and goes foreboding what is coming. She takes a sweet way of emboldening him. She desires him to pluck a rose that grows high out of a nettle bush on the wall. He turns round and sees the meaning in her face. Then despite the stinging nettle picks the rose and throws himself on his knees before her, takes her hand and pours out his whole heart.

XXXII. SHE PASSES :

Sources—E.P.I. Po XV pa 15/E.P. Po XIX, pa 79

Place and Date of Composition—Bayswater, London, June 1894 (E.P.I.) Bayswater, July 20 1894(E.P.)

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Alternative Readings :

I, 3. Heart that unsatisfied to be tranquil never (E.P.I.)

Heart insatiable will you throb and have peace never (E.P.)

IV. 1. faint(E.P.I.) swoon (E.P.)

XXXIII. O STARS THAT SHINE SO DISTANT, WAS IT NOW AND HERE :

Sources—E.P.I., Po XLI pa 39/E.P.A. pa 4

Place and Date of Composition—Bankipore, April 3rd, 1896
(E.P.I.).

Alternative Readings :

I, 1. O star that shines so distant (E.P.I.)

O stars that shine so distant (E.P.A.)

II, 2. It was, it was, I whisper (E.P.I.)

Was it true, I whisper (E.P.A.)

XXXIV. THE INVITATION :

Sources—E.P.I., Po XIX, pa 18/No other draft is found amongst the MSS.

Place and Date of Composition—Bankipore, Autumn 1895.

XXXV. THE LETTER :

Sources—E.P. VI pa 8/No other draft is found among the MSS.

Place and Date of Composition—Undated, place not mentioned.

Note :

The poet at first seemed to have wished to give the poem another turn as indicated by the stanza given below which was to follow stanza 6 and is found on page 7.

She read, and broke the envelope : and what pain

Out of her mind for even those minutes to see

Her eyes dim-lidded on other things remain,

Minutes that seemed to linger eternally.

XXXVI. SIESTA :

Sources—E.P.I., Po XX pa 19/E.P. Po XVIII pa 53.

Place and Date of Composition—Undated, place not mentioned

Alternative Readings :

In E.P. the title of the poem is *Tae Dium Mundi*.

The poem in E.P. consists of five stanzas of which the first three correspond to stanzas 1,2,4, of the poem in E.P.I., the fourth and fifth stanzas of the version found in E.P. is given below :

Sky, that Love half holds his breath,

Now so vast it spreads, so lonely,

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Distance where to wish seems death,
Every kiss a madness only.
And to our sad kisses truth
Bares now, though, no boughs remain,
No sweet cloud or shade of ruth,
Nature's homeless countenance.

XXXVII. TRUE YOUR LOOK :

Sources—E.P.I. Po XXIV pa 24/E.P.V. pa 25

Place and Date of Composition : Calcutta, 25th January to 15th February 1897(E.P.I.).

Alternative Readings : " "

V, 3. heavens (E.P.I.) radiance/distance (E.P.V.)

VIII, 4. Do I love you* (E.P.I.) Love, I love you (E.P.V.)

XXXVIII. MEMORY AT THE DOOR :

Sources—E.P.I. Po XXVI pa 25 (No other draft available amongst MSS).

Place and Date of Composition—Bankipore, March 1886 (E.P.I.)

XXXIX. PASSIONATELY LONELY STAR :

Sources—E.P.I. Po XXXVIII pa 37/E.P.V. pa 20

Place and Date of Composition—Dacca, April 18th-20th 1898.

Alternative Readings :

I, 4. soft (E.P.I.) sweet (E.P.V.)

I, 6. Hasting to unbar (E.P.I.)

Throbbing to unbar/in my soul to bar(E.P.V.)

II, 4. Woos, surrounds in bloom (E.P.I.)

Woos, and throngs in bloom/woos, besets in bloom (E.P.V.)

II, 6. Thousands me disroom (E.P.I.) Thousands me untomb (E.P.V.).

III, 4. With the thought of me (E.P.I.) with one ecstasy (E.P.V.).

III, 8. Poised in ecstasy(E.P.I.) O with me, with me! (E.P.V.)

XL. LOVE BLIND :

Sources—E.P.I. Po XXXIX pa 37/E.P. VI pa 12,22

Place and Date of Composition—Undated, place not mentioned.

Alternative Readings :

The version on page 12, E.P. VI differs entirely from E.P.I. and is therefore given below :

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And has the sun forgot thee glorious boy !
Wither yearn those wings upon the wind !
Those hands that rashly those shafts employ !
Ah ! wherefore art thou blind ?

So radiantly up into the day
Thy sightless face is lifted, how must we,
O sad immortal, born to miss thy way,
Though mortals pity thee.

Child in simplicity, no child in form,
What joyful, hastening eager trustfulness
Hurries thee into regions all of storm
And havens harbourless.

See ! but O mockery, thou canst not see,
In ambush for thy dear detested life,
Hatred that too well sees and jealousy,
And Treason with his knife.

The blind wings bear thee out of thy doomed way
All prosperous things in prudence turn aside,
The wise world smiles, and Reason that like day
Sees cannot but deride.

O wither 'gainst unnumbered enemies
Dear fearless archer ignorantly bound
Millions of sorrows, throngs of miseries,
Awaiting to hem thee round.

Not this way, thou hast all mistook thy road,
Relinquishing in paradise apart
The blissful seats, to make thy rash abode
The tossing human heart.

And wherefore ? Ah methinks he would reply
Because he knows on earth what follies are
Dim mists, where nothing's sure, the memory
And light of truth how far

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A truer light within himself he had,
All seemed so dark without, misleading woo ;
Therefore he hid his eyelids in deep shade,
He would be wiser so.

XLI. HERE FRESHLY SINGS THE NOONDAY WOOD :

Sources—E.P. VI pa 14, 16/E.P.V pa 1/E.P. pa 17, 33, 77, 100

Place and Date of Composition—Undated, place not mentioned

Alternative Readings :

On page 17 E.P., the poem is addressed to Cradoc Williams. On page 77 of the above MSS we get the line, "O Cradoc, come this happy hour."

Also in the above MSS the fourth stanza is not found. (Stanza 1 on page 100, stanzas 2 and 3 on page 17, stanzas 5 and 6 on page 77). In E.P. V we find the 1st stanza missing.

XLII. CEASED IS THE TONE OF WATERS :

Sources—E.P. VI. pa 38 (No other draft of the poem is found amongst the MSS.).

Place and Date of Composition—Place not mentioned, undated

XLIII. NOW AT THIS MOMENT GRAVE :

Sources—E.P. pa 27B/E.P. VI

Place and Date of Composition—Place not mentioned, undated

Alternative readings :

II,3. Streaming (E.P. VI) blinded (E.P.)

V,3. That I leave to you (E.P. VI) That, that I leave to you (E.P.)

XLIV. AN EYE THAT GATHERS BOLDER LIGHT :

Sources—E.P.I. Po XXVIII pa 26/E.P. VI pa 2

Place and Date of Composition—Place not mentioned, undated

Alternative Readings :

I,4. darling (E.P.I.) daring (E.P. VI)

In E.P. VI the poem is entitled, The Two Mothers, meaning the human mother and Nature. Besides the three stanzas in E.P.I. as given in the present text, we find three more stanzas on page 3 E.P. VI which are given below :

"Serenely her grave look afar
Bends down the mothered all to own,

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Whose holy breasts the mountains are,
 Whose lap the valleys lone.
 'Tis from her womb
 All things ungloom
 And glorying leap each one,
 Her face the heavens are and her eyes the sun

Dread solemn Nature spouse of God,
 Mother and nurse on all things bent,
 In the vast silence listening awed
 To hear the vast intent.
 Rocked on the lonely hours
 This gallantest of flowers

* * * *
 * * * *

Not in the crowded garden bed
 With delicate lilies, but be his
 With mountains and with cloud to wed
 And meet the rain's cold kiss.

On heath and moor.

To him ensure

The roughness of the blast
 On wildest beauty let his soul break fast.

XLV. SAKI, ERE OUR LIFE'S DECLINE :

Sources—E.P. VI. pa 101 (No other draft of the poem is found in any other M.S.S.).

Place and Date of Composition—Place not mentioned, undated

XLVI. VOICE IN CAVERN DIM AND STRANGE :

Sources—E.P.I. Po XXX pa 31 (No other draft found in any other M.S.S.).

Place and Date of Composition—Place not mentioned, undated

XLVII. THE INDIAN SERANADE :

Sources—E.P.I. Po XLV pa 43/ E.P. VI. pa 81 (Incomplete)

Place and Date of Composition—Place not mentioned, undated.

Alternative Readings :

I, 5 & 6. The lines are missing in E.P. VI

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- II, 5 & 6. By palace towers in breezy shade
 By tall trees laid. (E.P. I.)
 While stands the moon above the green
 'Mong tall trees seen (E.P. VI)
- IV, 5 & 6. The lines are missing in E.P. VI
- V, 3. Two words not composed in E.P. VI
- VI, 5 & 6 The lines are missing in E.P. VI
- VII. Not composed in E.P. VI

XLVIII. INDA'S IDOL :

MSS Sources—Early Poems, Vol. I and Early Poems, Vol. III

Date—The following dates are found on various pages of the above manuscripts :—

Date	E.P.	MSS	Page
September 1896	„	III	1
July 17th 1905	„	I	48
January 26th 1908	„	I	56
January 6th 1909	„	I	52
January 15th 1909	„	I	61
January 17th 1909	„	I	54
January 26th 1909	„	I	64
(Swaraswati Pujah)			
February 8th 1909	„	I	66
July 30th 1909	„	I	50

It seems that the Poem was written in 1896 and revised on subsequent dates.

Title of Poem :

The poet seems to have hesitated between three titles. "The Idol That Came To Life," "Uma's Idol," "The Beautiful God" but later changed it to Inda's Idol in the final version (E.P. III Pages 1 & 44).

Heroine's Name :

In the rough draft the name is Uma. Once Roma is used but finally the name chosen is Inda. There are some other names which have suggested themselves to the poet, Rukmini, Pushpa, (E.P. III Page 2) Radha, Roma, Uma (Page 28).

Hero's Name :

Arjun (E.P. III page 29) As the poem did not advance very far and was not finished this name is not used.

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The Story—(Compiled from notes of the poet on various pages in E.P. III. As far as possible the poet's own language has been retained.)

Inda is the daughter of a defeated and dethroned king who has taken refuge near the temple in which the idol, with whom Inda considers herself married, is installed. As a child Inda strayed into the inner temple which she had been forbidden to enter and she had fallen in love with the image of the god. Her passion was so great that she became very unhappy at the non-fulfilment of her love. To console her and prevent her from falling ill her father betrothed her to the idol by exchange of garlands.

When her father died, because of her exceeding beauty which they thought unfit for the enjoyment of men, she was made the priestess of the God by the villagers. Inda's life was one of outward worship and service of the idol but in her heart there was an intense longing that the idol should come to life and take her to his home in paradise.

The poem opens on Inda's birthday. A storm is brewing. There are huge clouds in the sky as if some great, great thing to come were impending. The ever waiting Inda filled with delicious hopes goes to her stony god. The apartment is hushed more deeply in awe of the coming thunder. There he stands, the beautiful image, her silent and strange lover.

A new thought that had never occurred to her before is suggested to her by her desperate longing. She puts a ring set with diamonds and emeralds on the finger of the god. The diamond symbolises her bright hope, the emerald her hope ever-green. She hopes that he will feel it burn upon his hand as she has put into it all her long passion and yearnings. After the sacramental rite she retires thinking the god would not come down as long as she is in his presence.

Meanwhile a prince, the son of the king who had defeated Inda's father and forced him to flee, seeks shelter from the storm in the temple. Through the half open door he sees and hears Inda. Seeing Inda leave and as the storm bursts in thunder and lightning the Prince enters the inner shrine and puts on his finger the wonderfully brilliant ring which Inda had just put on the hand of the idol.

Hearing the dreadful clatter of the storm Inda thinks that the transformation has taken place and re-enters the room. She finds the god unmoving and unchanged and once more passionately appeals to him to become living and accept his little human wife.

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Suddenly she sees the prince with the ring, which she has put on the finger of the god, on his finger. This, along with his Greek features, carries a strange conviction to her heart that he is the god. The Prince has been standing astonished at Inda's passionate ardour in addressing the god as well as drinking in her beauty. Now he tries to tell her that he is no god but she refuses to believe him and overpowers all denial. Like Sebastian before Olivia he yields to the misrepresentation and allows her to conduct him to the wonderful chamber which she has prepared many years before for the god. As they pass through the pillared corridors delicious bursts of thunder are heard while wafted from outside come the heart-filling smell of roses, odours loosed by the rain. They feel the joy of the drenched world as leaf whispers to glad leaf, "the rain, the rain !"

That night she slept a dreamless, perfect, peaceful sleep and wakes with blissful assurance. The world is changed to her. An ethereal light bathes the landscape. Heaven has come nearer to earth. The flowers at her feet become imperishable. Yes ! They will fade but she is now immortal.

She visits the Prince in the morning with sacred garlands, incense and offerings of flowers and fruits which she begs him to accept. She is full of joy and radiance now that he has come to life. The world is suffused with morning gladness in sympathy with her. She represses her feelings, the wish of rush into his arms and put her head on his bosom remembering with awe that he is an immortal but she sings a hymn of solemn love and welcome in which she asks the god not to be displeased with the feelings she represses. She would go into his arms he looks so mild and human, so without his terrors. She tells him of her fear that she will lose him and he will glide again into his marble image. (The end of the speech is not given. There is only a note that Inda ends her speech with noble thoughts.)

Inda then offers him sacred garlands and burns incense in adoration of him. The prince turns away his face painfully affected by the incongruity, yet half amused. "Is she mocking him ? How like a scene in a play or a wonderful dream ! Is she acting a part ? Then how ridiculous his position.

Oh no ! The light of joyful adoration is in her eyes ! It is real, real, neither dream nor drama. But his own situation ? He shivers at himself. How has he become a god ? He feels a sense of dis-

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appointment at her distant adoration and awe of him. To be adored by such a goddesslike creature ! He is a mighty prince but he feels that she, oh she, is a goddess. He feels humbled like a slave before her.

He schools himself to act the godhead which she ascribes to him and assumes divinity, at first, uncomfortably and awkwardly. When he asks her to tell him her story, her loneliness and strange adoration of the image she is surprised and asks him how it is that he does not know his poor Inda's story. Does he not know that her father had dedicated her to him before his death? The Prince can only weakly reply, "Yes, I know, I know it all," for he must act the part of the godhead.

Again the prince tells Inda that it saddens him to think that supposing, only supposing, he were mortal like herself would she love him less. He tells her that she does not really love him but only loves him for his godhead and his immortality.

Inda replies, "Oh speak not of mortal and mortality ! I am sick to death of mortal things, but you are a god."

The Prince shudders and replies, "Yes, I am a god."

Then like a madman he murmurs to himself, "Now could I but be a god ; could I be, but be !" Lifted above himself, exalted by her words, he flashes his sword in the light. Sometimes imparadised in the perfume of her worship, in the bliss of her presence and his own love he almost dreams himself to be a god, yielding to the flattery of a heavenly dreaming possibility which he knows to be impossible.

At other moments he thinks, "O what a biting mockery to be thought what she thinks him and to be what he is !" It was as if the whole universe was taunting him with his human frailty and perishableness.

O the passionate pleasure of the touch of her lips. But alas, it was not him that she kissed. It was the wonderful, the beautiful, the enviable image. But he is compelled to act the part because of the role of the drama assigned to him.

Inda talks of the beautiful place of their destination but the Prince only answers briefly now and then. He tells her, "Ah Inda, I delay to tell you. The only road thither lies through dreadful anguish and torment. It is the road of death". But Inda only urges him to tell her of Paradise. The Prince replies, "We in heaven are weary of the unbroken bliss and envy mortals their pains and sorrows."

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When she refuses to believe him, feeling uncomfortable, he does not know what to answer. He thinks within himself, "With you is paradise and this is heaven."

Inda in blissful assurance and unconscious of the mortality of the Prince watches him aloof. The Prince feels that he has to act a most difficult part that ever man was called upon to act. One false gesture, one imperfect word and farewell to happiness ! Wretched, compelled to act a part he knows not, to be hissed at by the staring spectators. He says to himself, "Demand of me anything humanly possible, heroic deeds, courage ! I so love you, I could do that, but a god, who can be that !"

Meanwhile Inda full of happy assurance of her immortality feels almost guiltily fortunate. She melts in divine pity for brief earth, perishable short-lived things, struggling weak and woeful. No, she could not leave them.

The Prince conscious of his guilt flushes hotly. Fear of the god whom he is impersonating, the impiety of his action weighs on him. Then he thinks that should the real god whom he is impersonating suddenly appear on the scene, the false god, what sort of face would he wear ?

But Inda's constant cry is, "Take me away to your home in paradise. Why do you not take me ? O take me soon to Paradise. Am I not fit, living in spirit there and acclimatised these many years ?"

And the Prince replies, "I linger because it may terrify you. Nay, perchance you may be disappointed."

"Never, never !" replies Inda.

In the days that follow, at times the Prince is carried away by the passionateness of her conviction and almost imagines that he is a god. How sweet and paradisaical is the life that he is leading. But as on the stage an actor, amid the blaze of lights and fairy scenery, in an enchanted world, himself personating a king and beloved of some fair wonder among princesses, lives in the dream which he acts, yet knows it to be hollow and artificial, the prince also is aware of the hollowness of his part. Also an actor cannot be serious however possessed with his part because he knows that he is acting. The prince is like a poet who is surprised at the greatness and fertility of his inspiration and thought that lifts him far above humanity and his dull self. But to Inda her dream was an intense reality.

When the Prince affects the sublime with a weak affectation

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of sublimity, Inda melts into softness and womanly fear. When he becomes weak with extreme love and is ready to confess his imposition, she becomes troubled and menacing. When she talks in that rapt visionary way as if gazing on some unseen glory, he feels a creeping fear go through him.

After the first few days the flush and rapture felt at her idol coming to life passes away and a reaction comes. All is still the same. The flowers wither, things sicken and die, earth has not been transfigured at the coming of the god save in her own imagination. So she constantly and eagerly asks the prince, "Art thou he?" She cannot dream of any human lover coming to love her. She looks at the image and then at him. "Oh no! It cannot be. That so divine and immortal and this so earthly. Has he disguised himself? Ah wherefore should he take a less beautiful form when he comes to appear before her who adores him, to fetch her to his home."

She asks him to show her a sign of his power, to declare his divinity. She kneels before him. But he will not and she is troubled. She wonders why she does not so much love him, now that he has come to life. His presence fills her with a sense of autumn and decay. His absence restores her original conception of his heavenliness and ideality.

One day she wanders into the chamber of the statue, neglected and unthought of for many days. Surprise and fear blanches her face. Scales seem to fall from her eyes. The mystery and marvel of the statue remain. Frightened she compares the glorious beauty of the idol with the commonness of its living representation. In her desire for her ideal to become real, in her joy at his suddenly having become so she has passed over the discrepancy.

She speaks to him. "Often, often I saw in a dream you came to me and now you have come in earnest, living and real. But you are not so beautiful as my dream. Oh, why are you not so beautiful? Is it because the cloddy damp of this perishable earth-atmosphere, the burden of things that die, stifles the ethereal divineness of you?"

Often she laughs at herself, the wretched irony of things! This immortal was weaker than if mortal and at every step she must encourage, support and fire him. Her doubts and suspicions became too torturing to bear and one day when she comes as usual to worship

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him she cries, "Let me not regret the cry, the words that brought thee to life."

Finding no way to allay her doubts and suspicions, the Prince reveals to her his real identity, and tells her her history. In utter disillusionment, Inda sobbing falls back in a storm of tears. Her first mood after discovery is fierce anger. She will hardly hear any excuse.

(*Note of the Poet*—Show by subtle touches the contrast, the nobility of the worshipper and the weakness of her god. Such contrast will heighten and sharpen the irony of the situation. MSS. E.P. III page 13).

The Prince argues with her and to frighten her suggests dreadful possibilities : this god of hers if he exists must be old with innumerable years, deaf with hearing, and blind with seeing all the sorrows of a thousand worlds.

When she will not listen to any of his arguments he cries out, "Incredible ! Are you not disillusioned ? Can you think that stony thing will come to life and you will ever make it hear standing in marble helplessness ?"

Inda wants no longer her divine husband. She only wants the lovely statue to come to life and bring some joy into her heart desolated by the mockery of an imposter. She no longer attends the Prince and goes back to her ardent worship of the statue.

Finding that still her lovely statue will not come to life and her prayers and waiting are ineffectual, in the sweet simplicity of her desire she undresses and presents before him her beautiful body (never undraped to any eye before) to tempt him down from his pedestal. She had seen herself one day while bathing her lovely body beautifully mirrored in the water and this suggested to her to make trial of the power of her beauty on the god.

The Prince inadvertently sees her. He fancies that he sees the whole face and aspect of the idol gazing with lustful desire and in a madness of jealousy breaks the idol and this kills Inda.

Short notes by the poet on the story, the character of Inda and the treatment of the Poem.

(1) The story itself is so beautiful it needs to be told simply and directly, without much ornament or straining after effect ; so too the ideas are so striking that they should be broadly and simply expressed, without seeking after effects (MSS. E.P. III page 1).

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(2) *Uma's (Inda's) character.*—Two elements, simple imaginative and child-like mixed with the sublime and philosophical. (E.P. III page 7).

(3) Various methods must be alternated judiciously, so as to avoid monotony—action, dialogue, analysis of feeling, description of nature.

The progressive interest of the story should be attained through the progress of his passion and fear of discovery, and by the progress of her illusion, her love of him and fear of disillusionment. All the prominent points of the story must be whole scenes. The rest may be condensed into a number of stanzas. The story may be divided into scenes, some very short of only a few stanzas, every canto forming a single scene as in a drama. (MSS. E.P. III page 7).

(4) The difficult problem is not to let it stagnate into detached passages of poetry without progress in the story, yet on the other hand to dovetail as much poetry into the story as it progresses as possible, to choose and severely select incidents that are pregnant for outburst of poetic feeling. (MSS. E. P. III page 19).

(5) Every stanza in the first scene must have an air of expectation and add to the effect when he (the Prince) actually appears (MSS. E. P. III page 21).

(6) There is another way, a nobler method of opening the poem. Vaguer, using more Latin words and without giving any definite pictures, only a vague and large feeling of the whole thing, the sense of expectation in Roma's (Inda's) mind, blending together instead of being strongly contrasted. (MSS. E. P. III page 28).

(7) The sanity of Roma's (Inda's) mind—she is fully conscious of the foolishness of her actions in the eyes of the world.

Alternative Readings of Inda's Idol as in E.P. I. and E.P. III.

II, 5. waves (E.P.I.) hosts (E.P.III.)

IV, 6. more yet (E.P.I.) yet more (E.P.III.)

V, 2. fragrant steps (E.P.I.) fragrances (E.P.III.)

VI, 1. proud (E.P.I.) bright (E.P.III.)

VI, 4. unutterable (E.P.I.) unspeakable (E.P.III.)

VII, 6. labours (E.P.I.) nostrils (E.P.III.)

VIII, 2. make like (E.P.I.) make as (E.P.III.)

XI, 4. noonday's sleep (E.P.I.) noon's wide sleep (E.P.III.)

XIII, 2. swooning lilies (E.P.I.) bending lilies (E.P.III.)

Stanzas XIV and XV of E.P.I. are omitted in E.P.III. and

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therefore the numbering of stanzas in the present text differs from the text in E.P.III.

- XIX, 2. From the fulfilment of each purposed rite (E.P.I.)
From each sweet act each restful holy rite (E.P.III—
XVII, 3)
- XIX, 3. passion all surgeless (E.P.I.) passion grown surgeless
(E.P.III—XVII, 3)
- XX, 2. shakes (E.P.I.) disturbs (E.P.III—XVIII, 2.)
- XXI, 1. catch (E.P.I.) clutch (E.P.III—XIX, 1).
- XXII, 1. heart (E.P.I.) hope (E.P.III—XX, 1)
- XXII, 3. blackness (E.P.I.) gloom-hung (E.P.III—XX, 3)
- XXIV, 5. where deep enshrined (E.P.I.) where enshrined (E.P.III—
XXII, 5)
- XXIV, 6. In the sacred cool and dimness (E.P.I.) she in dim
and sacred cool, (E.P.III—XXII, 6)
- XXV, 6. shining (E.P.I.) high (E.P.III—XXIII, 6)

From stanzas XXIX to XXXV there is no clearly written copy in E.P.I. These stanzas correspond to stanza XXVII to stanza XXXIII of E.P.III, (fair copy). From stanza XXXVI to XLIII of the present text the versions in E.P.I. and E.P.III tally. These stanzas are fairly written on page 58 of E.P.I.

- XXXVII, 6. droops (E.P.I.) mourns (E.P.III.)
- XXXVIII, 1. Thou wilt remember and as that first peal (E.P.I.)
You will remember ! O and as that peal (E.P.III.)
- XXXIX, 6. didst thou (E.P.I.) did you (E.P.III.)
- XL, 3. Dost thou not yearn with curiosity (E.P.I.)
Do you not ache in immortality (E.P.III.)
- XL, 6. yearning (E.P.I.) burning (E.P.III.)
- XLII, 2. vivid with birth and briefness (E.P.I.) moulded of
bloom and summer (E.P.III.)
- XLII, 5. need (E.P.I.) want (E.P.III.)
- XLIII, 5. warm (E.P.I.) sweet (E.P.III.)
- XLIII, 6. And loneliness of all thy myriad years (E.P.I.)
The lonely waste of heaven's uncounted years (E.P.III.)

APPENDIX II

Prince Pomegranate

Stray Notes of the Poet on the Story, the Character and some Characteristics of Prince Pomegranate.

The story as appears from notes left by the author runs as follows : Queen Jefirazni casts a kind of magic spell on queen Gulsharoube, shows her the picture of Kama painted by a great artist and makes her pray for a child, who will be called Prince Pomegranate which is the name of the God of Love which men were forbidden to pronounce. The prayer forces the God of Love to incarnate in her womb in virgin conception and she calls him Prince Pomegranate. She goes to the woods with her beautiful baby and leaves him with an anchorite. The boy grows up with hunter boys in the woods. After this probably it was intended that a series of separate adventures of the Prince Pomegranate would follow. What is found in the MSS are one or two passages and some sentences which were intended to be incorporated in the proper context and were noted down by the poet as they flashed in his mind. Some of these are given below.

1. "The silent orange of a marvellous summer moon had clomb into the universe, hanging night after night among the cypress leaves in giant orb'd apparition : and all night long the bul-bul's palpitating throat died bleeding with so rich an ecstacy that even the old, old anchorite was wooed to lean and listen at the door of his companionless hut. He listened, and with bursts that bacchanal throated melodist seemed to set the very dark on fire. To the aged solitary what was it but a beautiful madness, a rapture that disturbed him from that passionate world beyond the leaves, witching his high thoughts away in their own despite ? Here long ago beneath this dusk of awful swaying soliloquy he had come, a milk white Brahmin lad in the sweet gravity and disdainful bloom of his boyhood. Here in the vast pensive-leaved woodland he dwelt apart, a paramour of silence. Kings and catastrophes, beauty and bloodshed, the lash of the oppressor and the groans of the oppressed might rave as they would, far away, behind the screen of gentle leaves. The whisper-

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ing feet of the hours were to him a solemn rosary. And now month had slid into month and still in one marble attitude he lay profoundly thinking beneath the stars, dream beyond dream and vision within vision till the face of very youth seemed to dawn on him adorably smiling. What mischief was it had drawn him to listen. Thicker and thicker came these droppings of delight, staining with sweet earthliness his intellectual austerity. And drinking of God's great silence he burned to be lost in it ; and his mystical life, hidden even from God, grew perfect like a moon or a maiden in the coldness of the dawn that breaks from the snows of the Himalayas, in the coldest of caves to bury the coldest of hearts, his heart, till it grew like Shiva's halcyon, freed from the fever of desire. (MSS E.P. page 10).

2. "The Virgin mother and the glorious baby. Her eyes are cast upward to heaven or are modestly fixed on earth."

3. "No human form had been mirrored in these eyes of the anchorite till he sees Prince Pomegranate."

4. Prince Pomegranate grows up with the hunters in the valleys of Dohra Doon till the princess Gulrus passes that way towards the kingdom of her betrothed lover and husband. She sees him and so utterly falls in love with him that she forgets the husband to whom she was to be married in a few days. They journey together in the princess's palanquin and lay a plot to murder the king and usurp the throne.

5. It was in this rude mountain village where the coarse and simple people brought flowers and worshipped him that he conceived that he might be a God and not a man.

6. The Princess in the ecstasies of her mad passion is sometimes seized with the fear that he might be a God. His foster-father in his gloomy madness shot an arrow at him many times but failed in his attempt to murder him, which increased his own idea of his deity. So now he thinks if he is a god, to conspire to murder the king is excusable. At least so he tries to soothe his guilty conscience.

7. The other mode of treatment—he fears that he is a God, "O mockery a mere man and was he called to play the part of a God ? If he could but strip himself of the sense of pity, the need of human sympathy, were he made exempt of hunger ! Were he fearless of spear and poniard !—then perhaps,—but now ? Yet a strange pride, a secret pleasure hardened in him."

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8. A wingless god or a winged man———" (E.P. page 11.)

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9. "That the heart of an enemy laid palpitating at my feet might wake a delicious shiver through my hair. (E.P.)

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The beauty of Prince Pomegranate and its effect :

(1) "He was tall and like a sunflower with a certain largeness and heaviness of beauty." (E. P. page 8).

(2) "White and wonderful as the moon, his features were as delicate as if wrought in ivory. The boyhood of a rose blossom swelled in his perfect lips. And what was that dimple unforgettable that played so heart-maddeningly at the corners of his lips. (E. P. page 4).

(3) "The first feeling of everyone who saw Prince Pomegranate is that of having found the world's desire and a horrible fear of losing it which makes them utterly miserable. (E. P. page 9).

(4) "The tendrilled vine curled and shook in his laughing tresses." (E. P. page. 128).

(5) "It was beauty cast not in the mould of earthly likelihood yet somehow most lovably familiar." (E. P. page 128).

(6) "It was not the flowery delirium of the senses. It was the fever of the naked soul." (E. P. page. 128).

(7) "Thou hast robbed the face out of the looking glass of Narcissus in the forest-framed mirror of a mountain lake." (E. P. page. 8).

(8) "If she turned round to gaze on him she was silent with wonder. The roses were not red enough to comprehend his beauty." (E. P. page. 9).

Prince Pomegranate's Speech

(1) And still between rapid lips and light laughter flowed the brooklet of dialogue as they looked down into the black depths and heard the lisping lapse of waters. (E. P. page. 9).

(2) "Magical gift of talk—Words became wonderful on his lips as though they borrowed his own personal charm". (E. P. page. 12).

(3) "The squirrels heard in the hollow of the great chestnut tree ; each word came deliberately from his lips, hard, cold and pitiless, like iron that strikes against anvil. Subtle curious sayings that revealed the whole world to the hearer" (E. P. page 4.).

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Prince Pomegranate's Nature

(1) "The cruelty of a lad who is adorable." (E. P. page. 8).

(2) "Terror and mystery ! why had they such a thrilling attraction for him ? (E. P. page. 9).

(3) "He felt the murderers thrill of joy mixed with his natural horror and a sense of guilty relief. She was dead. The sight of her warm loving heart and human joyfulness could no more smite him with envy and reproach for his own spiritual ugliness". (E. P. page 11).

(4) "There must be *diablerie* in Prince Pomegranate". (E. P. page 11).

(5) "Or was it the beautiful contempt for our wretchedness which the gods give to the demigods or those they love." (E. P. page. 4).

(6) "As when on the dull earth of average there comes upon us some divine creature all youth and enjoyment and radiant with the sudden charms of novelty. We meet the type of our worship and life becomes suddenly real and full of meaning to us."

(7) "Caesar's shame and the beggar's splendour."

(8) "Too divine for the common daylight."

(9) "Terror and adverse fate had been given him as a shield that beneath its cover he might taste the assaults of joy."

(10) "A splendid contagion of life seemed to breathe about him."

APPENDIX III

A plan for the Early Poems

Book the First—The Exile

Book the Second—Myvanwy (First Acquaintance)

Book the Third—Julian (First Acquaintance)

Book the Fourth—The Man (Progress of Friendship)

Book the Fifth—The Woman (Progress of Love)

Book the Sixth—The Return.

Poems already written for Book the First—The Exile

1. Sleep sweet Sleep dost thou so soon forsake me
2. Thou who hast followed far with eyes of love
3. While I recall you o'er deep parting seas
4. Between the blossomed hedgerows happy and fair
5. Farewell sweetest country, out of my heart you roses
6. Dim with its outgrown flowers, sweet boyhood stretches behind me

Poems already written for Book the Second—Myvanwy

1. O happy hungry eyes, no more! Will you gaze forever
2. Say, O tranquil heart, what hath disturbed thee
3. Great wealth once was mine
4. Where art thou my old sweet quiet?
5. Cease O my spirit, cease this endless yearning
6. O lateness sweeter than May's first hope, unexpected September
7. O stars that shine so distant

Poems already written for Book the Third—Julian

1. Echo is melancholy there (*Unfinished*)

Poems already written for Book the Fourth—The Man

1. It is a Garden shy and sweet
2. Brief is the life of Man (*Ode*)
3. Hush my darling sleep again (*Written for Irene*)
4. Baby dear, and shall we sever? (*Written for Irene*)
5. Thoughts of a Mother, blissful solemn thoughts (*Written for Irene*)
6. An eye that gathers bolder light (*Written for Irene*)
7. Now lonely is the Wood (*Mentem Mortalia Tangunt*)

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Poems already written for Book the Fifth—The Woman

1. Spring that in greenest shade, all wet, unguessed by any
2. Virgin darkness wet and deep
3. Home at sunset worn and tired
4. 'Twas but this moment and can the wings of bliss
5. Dearest that sit'st in dreams—(Raymond and Ida)
6. O this happy summer day
7. O Painter bold and true, lord of every flying hue
8. Come, O come, for thou canst bless
9. Are not thy hands of honey, thy gifts of honey suckle
10. Over thy head in joyful wanderings
11. Heart, my heart, 'so'fond to linger

Poems already written for Book the Sixth. The Return

1. Ceased the roar of waters (Unfinished)

The above plan is found in MSS Volume VI, Page 61 of the Early Poems. The poems are probably classified autobiographically, according to the various emotional moods of the poet in early life.

1. Boyhood—a period of exile in England
2. Dawn of love—first of nature then of woman
3. Friendship
4. Progress of friendship
5. Progress of love
6. Return to India

Projected Sonnets

- A. Sonnets of the Mystery of Earth
- B. The Face or The Portrait

Titles of the proposed Sonnets

1. The Child
2. The Girl (Irene)
3. A glory passed me by
4. The Reveller
5. The Old Man
6. The Peasant
7. The Aged Mother
8. Imagination (Personified)
9. The Friend
10. The Girl and Father (On his coming home at evening)

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11. Summer to Youth

12. Maternal Pity (Reason speaks overwhelmed with the briefness and sadness of life.)

Note of the Poet

In these series of sonnets try to vary the form. (1) Simple description in vivid present tense (2) Someone addressing the subject of the sonnet as in *The Mother*. (3) The subject of the sonnet speaking in the first person and describing his feelings. (4) Some third person describing in vivid present tense the subject of the sonnet e.g. *Thoughts of a Mother*. (5) The Poet addressing the subject of the sonnet in the past tense.

(The project given above is to be found in MSS volume VI page. 68)

APPENDIX IV

Musings

True Nobility

1. True nobility is to look fearlessly at oneself as one really is and boldly manifest oneself to the world and let oneself be felt by the world. (E.P. Book VII page 18)

2. No man can be noble without a sense of his own worth, or great without firm faith in his high destiny and mighty powers. Yet it is only the noble soul that can refuse the praise that does not belong to him and is not grieved if he sees that he is not so great as another. (E. P. VII, page 19)

* * * * *

Of Himself—(Autobiographical)

English in manners, culture and speech I have an Indian heart and nature and thus there is a perpetual division in me. (E. P. Book VII page 145)

* * * * *

On Love

1. And to express the quintessence of himself he need but say I love. (E. P. VII, page 6)

2. Love obeys no laws, scorns all allegiance to rank, years or race and all the thousand differences and barriers that men build against one another. (E. P. VII, page 68).

3. What is Love ? The most masculine men, strange souls, think it is a weakness that robs them of their manhood. They feel the strong overmastering attraction of beauty and womanhood, as the great sun yields to the tender moon,—the mind compelled to bow before the heart. Others pluck love as a flower growing by the pathway of life, and deem it but a passing pleasure. But to me, to love was natural from my boyish years. 'Tis of my soul's essence, strong almost as life itself. And now that youth, like some strong river swollen with rains, flows full in me making the banks too weak—

* * * * *

when I see a lovely face, I must turn my look away as though I shunned a fire. (E. P. VII page 69.)

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4. Scarce can I help believing that love was in me while I lay unborn—and when at last I opened my eyes on Nature I was possessed with love for her. She haunted me like a passion. She was my passion as a boy and the sight of a fair maiden I loved as the fairest part of her and something more than sky and ocean because I felt in her eyes was something more kindred to myself than in the sight of these. (E. P., VII, page 69.)

5. No two hearts ever quite understand one another. We have power only over ourselves ; and yet how often do we vainly yearn to possess other hearts to which we have no natural claim. O better far is it to grasp into our own bosoms, strive to know ourselves, our faculties and powers and learn to put forth these. (E. P., VII, page 144.)

* * * * *

The Poet and Poetry and Art

1. The ever unsatisfied desire of his soul is to produce a thing of beauty that shall surpass the last. (E. P. VII page 7.)

2. Every poet must feel that ancient Greece is his true home and native land and that he is in some sense born out of that glorious age an exile. (E. P. VII page 7.)

3. The poet complains of the paucity of subject open to him—the lack of ideals to call forth his admiration and enthusiasm. Had he but ideals of loveliness, the loveliest women, and heroism, the most heroic men before him, then would he have plenty of matter indeed. But what can one expect in this prosaic age. (E. P. VII page 9.)

4. The Hebrew mind was poetical—The rainbow as a sign of reconciliation between earth and heaven, after the storm and deluge, surely he had the heart and eye of a poet who could say such a thing. (E. P. VII page 18.)

5. The poet now records no wars, no ensanguined fields. His subjects are drawn more from within himself, are tenderer, more homely and individual. (E. P. VII page 145.)

6. Everything in art that is true to life is poetry ; thus it would be better to call all kinds of representations of nature, poetry. Of course the hardest poetry to write and so the best is either the high and dignified or the deep and true. But these ought not to exclude those kinds which are neither. (E. P. VII page 150.)

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Nature, God and Immortality

1. What is happiness ? To fulfill the end of Nature. Glance through all the physical creation and see how happily the plants and animals live—that is because they live for the object for which Nature made them—they are single-hearted. It is easy for them to live so—for their capacities are limited. It is much harder for us to do this for our life is a conflict between the two natures in us, the life of thought and feeling and that of sense. Peasants are happy because they think so little. The physical life is what has interested most levels and they fulfill the end of Nature in living that. (E. P. VII page 116.)

2. The solemn name of God ! Name hated, name adored. (E. P., VII page 106.)

3. Butterfly, Chrysillis and Caterpillar—We are like the butterfly in its chrysillis state which feels its wings growing within it. We live a double life, the most imperfect part of which is destined to be fulfilled in another state. (E. P. VII page 119.)

4. My belief in immortality is founded on faith chiefly but it comes from my insight too. Life shall not end with Nature. No, it is too deep a thing, too subtle and too strong. Nature within Nature as the seed sleeps in the fruit—a double natured-thing. The flesh may wither but the seed's within. There still remains a principle of life that will survive. Look at that old man. From his eyes the faculty of vision fades away, then each sense, each nerve relaxes. Corporal energy retires deep into its mysterious cell, not flies. (E. P. VII page 70.)

5. It is all very well for us to say that the longing for immortality is vain and groundless because it is contradicted by physical realities. Why is the longing planted in us ? Whence does it come ? There must be cause for that as there is a cause for everything in nature. (E. P. VII page 118.)

* * * * *

Man and his surroundings

We cannot choose our surroundings. The varied and conflicting circumstances time brings together and yokes them to the car of life on which Time places the youthful inexperienced rider. They are like spirited and tameless steeds that career and plunge this way and that, impatient of each other and fretting against the yoke, threatening at the slightest error to overset the light car and throw the careless

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rider. These he must control and guide safe to the goal. With firm hands he must hold the reins and keep an eye as quick as unfaltering, now on the fierce horses, now on the road and now towards the distance. (E. P. VII page 106-107.)

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Man and Woman

Beauty is the best gift of womanhood, Courage of manhood. (E. P. VII.)

* * * * *

The origin of Religion and Poetry

The human mind is limited ; it is only a number of things close to us which we can understand. It is thus man feels himself so small in the vast universe, the greater part of which must remain a mystery to him so that he feels the necessity of giving expression to his deep impressions, this wonderful feeling which the universe awakes in him. The feeling is one of many shades, now admiration, now awe and so great is it that it sometimes takes the form even of terror, while the milder form produced by nearer objects is pleasure and rapture. Man therefore feels this so deeply that he must give expression to it. Hence arises religion and poetry. The simplest form of religion does not differ from the simplest forms of poetry. Both are called into life by the elemental feeling—admiration and awe of the overwhelming forces of Nature. Unfortunately now-a-days people are losing their faith and feelings, simply because they feel their intellect awakening ; and it will now be the office of poetry to do what religion is relinquishing. It is not merely necessary to know God (philosophy and science) because that knowledge is and must always be limited ; it is also necessary to feel him and this is what religion and poetry does. (E. P. VII page 164-5.)

* * * * *

Well did Goethe say that "God is a being incomprehensible to our human powers." Certainly very few of us feel very deeply his existence. The poet's eye looks through the world of Nature and finds him or rather the effulgence of him there. For the poet alone seems to have been gifted with a nature that can disengage it from the clouds of petty interests and cares and the winds and

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storms of passion which trouble our everyday life and baring his soul to the immense incomprehensible night of nature can calmly suffer the gleam of her beauty, movement, love and power to image itself there. He is conscious of the existence of God but does not comprehend it. No one can do that. Our rational power is but human ; and though it is our greatest boon as everybody feels when employed in the ordinary and near concerns of life, it is an eye that seems to lose its edge and keenness and becomes quite blunt when gazing at any deep distance. A calm spiritual insight is needed here. Hence the failure of most speculative philosophies. The bluntness and slowness of reason is proved in many ways. Thus often where a man with his broad illumined mind fails to see, a woman's quick intuitive sense, which is not based either on experience or reason, assures her of a thing.

But though we so seldom feel the heavenly we should not on that account call our everyday life petty, and to be despised, as poets are often in danger of doing. We do not live in heaven but on earth, and it is a duty and necessity to mingle in all the affairs of life, and this should be done with zest and cheerfulness. Milton and Wordsworth (and it is needless to add, Goethe), felt this especially and have beautifully expressed themselves on this subject. (E. P. VII page 152, 153, 154.)

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